A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

ILLUSTRATED

NELSON

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EDITED BY

JOHN BUCHAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

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PREFACE

THIS book has been prepared to some extent on the model of the *Histoire illustrée de la Littérature Française*, published by Henri Didier of Paris. The French work has been followed in the general arrangement of subjects, in the method of illustration, and in the bibliographies. There seemed to the Publishers to be room for a history of English literature which should occupy a middle place between the mere summary of the text-book and the more elaborate compendium in several volumes, and which should be at once a manual for the student and a book which could be used with profit by the general reader. The aim has been to give a prospect of the long course of English letters, showing the organic connection between the stages and the affiliations of the various schools, and to provide a critical and historical account of the writers which might serve as an introduction to the fuller study of their work. It was found impossible, without making the book of a clumsy thickness, to provide adequate extracts, and these are only given to illustrate a point of criticism.

The book has been prepared on a plan, which, however, has been occasionally departed from, where adherence to it would have been pedantic. The contributors have attempted throughout to show that English literature is a living thing, intimately connected with English life, and their appeal is not only to professed students of the subject in the secondary schools and universities, but to the great body of readers who desire a survey of the whole to supplement their study of a part, and who are in need of guidance in their reading. Consequently the book opens at that point in the history of English literature when it becomes interesting to the ordinary man. The story of the Origins is told fully, for the convenience of students, in the chapters of the Appendix.

The work was begun before the War, and, as is inevitable in composite works, a good deal of adjustment and interpolation has been found necessary. The Editor desires to record his gratitude to Dr. ERNEST A. BAKER, Director of the University of London School of Librarianship, and to Sir HENRY NEWBOLT for their invaluable assistance in the work of arrangement and revision.

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THE APPENDIX

Sections I. and II. are principally the work of Ernest A. Palser, M.A.
Section III. The first six Chapters are by Dr. E. A. Baker, and Chapter VII. is by J. H. G. Grattan.

The Chapters on The Language throughout are by Miss Hilda Murray of Girton College, Cambridge.

J. B.

July 1923.

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INTRODUCTION

We may say of Literature, as Goldsmith said of poetry, that it was from the first "consecrated to pleasure." The consecration is a double one. There is one pleasure of the writer, who in speaking out to his fellow-men delivers his own spirit. There are other pleasures of the reader: he is enjoying the new world created for him out of sound and thought, or he is responding to the intimacy of a nature greater and richer than his own, or he is joining himself to the fellowship of an old and splendid society, whose origins and development are traceable through a series of national records. His preference may be for any one of these three aspects of Literature—the æsthetic, the biographical, or the historic; or he may find in them all a mixed delight which will vary according to his own temperament. But, whatever be the mode of his pleasure, it will all be a widening and deepening of experience, all a part of the lifelong process of his education.

The time has been—it is, perhaps, not wholly past—when the words "pleasure" and "education" seemed to jar with one another. But modern thought is recovering for us an old and almost forgotten wisdom. We are learning to see education as the growth of the human powers, inevitable in every life, but favourable or unfavourable in proportion to the opportunities afforded for the gaining of experience—that is, for acquiring proficiency in the art of living. We see, too, or we shall soon be seeing, that the pleasures of art and science, whatever may be thought of other pleasures, are not in themselves of a kind to retard this experience, this proficiency. In reality the question does not arise at all, except by a false analogy from the grosser appetites: in the life of the spirit the distinction between pleasure and pain, or ease and effort, is meaningless. Our deepest learning is unconscious, our profoundest happiness often so full of pain as to be indistinguishable from it. What is the feeling with which we see *King Lear* acted, or read the end of the *Knight's Tale*? Is it not true that though all thought, all passion, all delight are the ministers of Love, yet "the paths of Love are rougher than thoroughfares of stones"? The important point is that after such experiences no human life can remain unchanged, and the lives are few that are beyond the reach of this kind of education.

But by what method is it to be administered? Literature is multifarious—so is the human mind: how can they be brought into contact with the best chance of pleasure for the greatest number? This is the problem which confronts the maker of a systematic study of any national literature, and it is a real problem, interesting, complicated, even controversial. To begin with, we must decide the question of

age: is our book to be offered to children, to students, to advanced students, or to the general reader?

Not to children. Literature is their affair, but the history of Literature is not. They are too near to the worlds of the imagination, and too far, as yet, from the world of Time; their need is for poetry, songs, drama, each for itself and by itself. And what we can teach them is not anything about books, but the first lesson of all, the use and delight of books. This is sometimes difficult, more often not; children naturally love beauty of words, beauty of form and colour, expressed emotion—and they love them most when given to them in concrete images or in scenes of action. Often they are nearer to poetry than they will ever be in after life; but it will take time for them to realize it as the work of individual men or the record of a community. The touch of human life will come first to them from the personality of the teacher, whose enthusiasm will arouse a similar emotion in them, as the vibration of one glass will set others ringing with the same musical note. At this stage linguistic, metric, or historical science is an impossibility; who would burden a child reading *The Water Babies* with notes on the derivation of Kingsley's style from that of Rabelais and his predecessors?

But the period of childhood does not last. Some day, at what age it is impossible to tell, we must leave it and enter upon the second stage of our journey, in which we shall have for guide the intellectual as well as the æsthetic sense. About the relative importance of the two and the amount of confidence which should be placed in them there will always be heart-searchings. We may believe with Meredith that humanity, "an army marching out of wilderness," owes its only hope of safety through the ages to the guiding of Reason; yet all artists and many others, even among the most reasonable, would prefer almost any human catastrophe to the perishing of the sense of beauty. Unconsciously perhaps, but unmistakably, there has for centuries been a conflict in English feeling on this point almost comparable to a sectarian difference in religious opinion. Yet it is vain to regard with fear or prejudice the æsthetic sense, for it is in children the strongest and most natural part of their life, and their education must be largely based upon it. It is equally certain when we are dealing with Literature as a means of education that the growth of the intellect will bring with it a change, of which we must take account. Just as no one can for long devote himself even to a game without beginning to take an interest in the technique and even the history of it, so for any child who is really a reader the time will come when the technique and the history of Literature will redouble the interest of the book itself.

It is fortunate that this is so, for no education, no personal growth, could satisfactorily correspond with life unless such an art as that of Literature were seen in its development and in its relation to the community. There is no reason why this desire to understand what is really the science of literature should interfere with the æsthetic appreciation of it. And it is the experience of all scholars that the two are in fact interwoven in a very close and significant manner. Instead,

therefore, of taking sides in a conflict between two parties, one of which distrusts the senses and the other disparages the reason, what we have to do is to keep both spiritual activities in view and point out clearly how the advantages of both are to be secured at the same time. Teachers can do something, if they are not themselves disabled by a party bias; but many of those who are passing through this second stage of the literary pilgrimage have left their school days behind and must look out for themselves. It will be worse than useless to offer either to young or old a guide to the beauties of Literature or a handbook to literary appreciation. What can be done is to provide, as is done in this work, a conspectus or map of the long course of Literature as it flows through the English landscape, prepared by writers whose pleasure in books is of the two-sided kind, and who have the necessary restraint to praise in few words, and the necessary scholarship to give information accurately and in the right proportion. The rest must be done by the reader; nothing can help or save those who have an unhealthy appetite for facts about authors and no natural hunger for the books themselves.

But, once given the true intellectual *wanderlust*, a book like this may lead us far. When we have secured, for ourselves or others, a childhood of " dear Imagination's only truth," and when we have spent the first ardour of study on the literary craft and tradition of our own people, we have come only to our true starting-place, the port of embarkation for a voyage over seas that are no longer our own territorial waters. They may call us now " advanced students," and our expedition a " university course " or " honour school "; we shall do better for ourselves if we think in terms of " humane letters " and a " philosophy of life." We have, in fact, come to the final and endless stage of our education, in which an " examination " could only be an early incident, and any answers we can give are only valuable in proportion as they answer questions of our own.

In this voyage we are explorers. We may travel over known regions, but even in those there are discoveries to be made. The map we draw will not be one that can be bought even from the best professionals, because it is the record of our own observations, and traced upon the chart of which we alone have the secret and the use. It will not be a map of our own island merely, but a survey of the inhabited world; not a history of English Literature only, but a study in the Making of the Western Mind. For though we in modern Europe have not the honour due to founders and benefactors, we have the wide lands of the past for our inheritance, and our literatures are to-day main streams into which more ancient rivers of thought have flowed down as tributaries. For the perfect understanding even of our own people and their national life and expression, we need to go upstream beyond the inflow of the Voltairean criticism, the German philosophy, the turbid current of the French Revolution, the Romantic revival in poetry and the tide of Industrialism, to the upper waters of the Renaissance. We must have in view the Reformation in England and Germany, the wave of intellectual revolt in France, the dominance and decline of Spain, the trade of the Dutch and the Elizabethans, the rise of Science

and the New Learning. Behind these again lies the country of Italian art, of the French troubadours, and of our own Chaucer, through whom we reach the world of Dante, of Boccaccio, and of the *Romance of the Rose*, and so back into the Middle Ages, the Feudal Empire, and the Œcumenical Church. Then across the Dark Ages of militarism, monasticism, and Mohammedanism, the decadence of Rome and the chaos of the barbarians, we shall see clearly the ancient streams of Hellenism and Hebraism passing down into twilight before the dawn of Christianity, and, even beyond these, we shall have some sense of the profound thought and poetry of India and the Far East.

It is a wonderful journey, but there are dangers by the way. Just as it is fatal in the earlier stages to make Literature a "knowledge subject," and bury the revelation of beauty under a cairn of facts, so in this later and longer part of the journey it would be fatal to fall into the error of treating Literature as a branch of history or of sociology. No study of it can be too wide or too exact, but its first and last appeal must always be æsthetic and emotional. Whatever its immediate object may be, Literature has always something of a philosophical aspect, and is great in proportion to this: "*Tout génie a deux faces; l'une tournée vers le temps, l'autre vers l'éternité.*" It is true that great writers are for the most part apparently bent on telling us of the things of Time; but what they are really suggesting by that very quality which makes their writing Literature, is Truth, which is of all countries and all times, and Beauty, which is less than half a native of any country or of any time. Even children feel this; they become listless or impatient when informed that a compliment to Queen Elizabeth is intruded into the most beautiful scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So the notes to many school editions are nothing but tiresome calls to us to come back from the asphodel fields where we are listening to our contemporaries, Homer, Dante, Milton, Æschylus, Shakespeare, Meredith, Hardy, and the rest; and those who make use of a History of Literature should never cease to remember that its intention is not to involve them in the turmoil of transitory life, but to bring them to that place apart.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

SECTION I

THE MAIN STREAM

[For Sources and Tributaries see Appendix.]

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

THE period in which Middle English was supplanted by Modern English, and the literary forms which are still current came into general use, ready moulds for the great creative impulses of the later Renaissance, is somewhat hard to define in point of date, owing to the overlapping of tendencies; but it is a period studded with important landmarks. In religion, in the body politic, in literature, it was a time of revolutionary movements that proved temporary or incomplete. But before it were the Middle Ages; after it, though the process of change may be often imperceptible, the beginnings of a new world are clearly discerned. Only one or two of the more decisive changes need be marked here. In the past, poetry and much else had been mainly an affair of oral delivery; it was now literature in the strictest sense, a matter of books and readers. Printing merely consummated a revolution in the attitude of the literary creator which had already begun. Hingeing upon this important change was another: anonymity was succeeded by authorship. A poem, a romance, a miracle play, had hitherto stood for itself; no one asked who wrote it, as no one asked who was the architect of a cathedral, the painter of a mural picture, or the carver of a statue. Henceforth a piece of writing claimed attention as a work of a particular author. The age of tradition was passing, when stories and characters were common property, and when the person, anonymous or avowed, who put forth a new romance took pains to show, not that he was original, but that he followed the best authorities. The age of invention, of originality, of individual self-expression had begun.

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

By the middle of the 14th century the fusion of the conquered and the conquering races was well-nigh complete. French had not yet ceased to be the ordinary medium of intercourse among the nobility, but the business of the law courts was (from 1362) carried on in English, and no more works of literature were written by Englishmen in the alien tongue. The French metrical romances, which had previously been read here in the original, were now current in numberless translations, adaptations, or imitations—a sign less of Continental influence than of the renaissance of English. The age of chivalry, though there were yet to be splendid revivals, was in its decline. Feudalism as a military system was all but gone. Constitu-

tional liberty had been asserted in the claim of Parliament to control taxation, and to be consulted in the more vital decisions of State. The king could no longer make war without the concurrence of the ruling classes, or carry on the administration of the country in a way repugnant to them. Unpopular ministers were dismissed at their behest; they exercised their power even to depose a king.

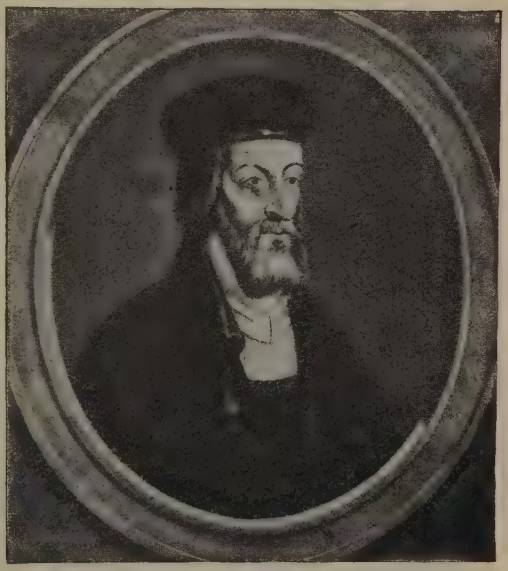
When Chaucer was growing to manhood, England was at the height of glory. Crécy had been fought (1346), and Poitiers (1356). The outburst of national poetry which gave us the great aftermath of alliterative romance is discussed in the Appendix;[1] this was the last great product of Middle English. The war songs of Laurence Minot were likewise an outcome of its martial ardour. But the splendours of this immortal epoch were soon to go into eclipse. England was visited by the Black Death in 1348–9, in 1361–2, in 1369, and again in 1375–6; half the population disappeared, two-thirds in the congested and insanitary towns. The economic troubles that followed this wholesale destruction of the labouring classes hastened on the process of change from serfdom to the wage-system, and from mediæval to modern forms of tenure; and were combined with other social troubles, to which the growing unpopularity of the royal house contributed. In France the war went disastrously, involving the country in heavy expenses. New forms of impost were resorted to, the poll-tax of 1380 falling on a class that had heretofore escaped. Led by John Ball, Froissart's "mad priest of Kent," the peasantry rose to protest against the exaction and to vindicate their right to sell their labour as they pleased, which had been denied them by the Statutes of Labourers (1349–51), and to a share in the land and a lot in life better than servitude to a licentious and spendthrift noblesse. London fell into the hands of the rebels, and there was

The Scriptorium.
(From an old picture.)

[1] See p. 628, etc.

a great burning of court-rolls ; but Wat Tyler was killed, and the revolt suppressed, on the promise of Richard II. that all grievances should be redressed. The pledge of amnesty was not observed, but villeinage had received its deathblow.

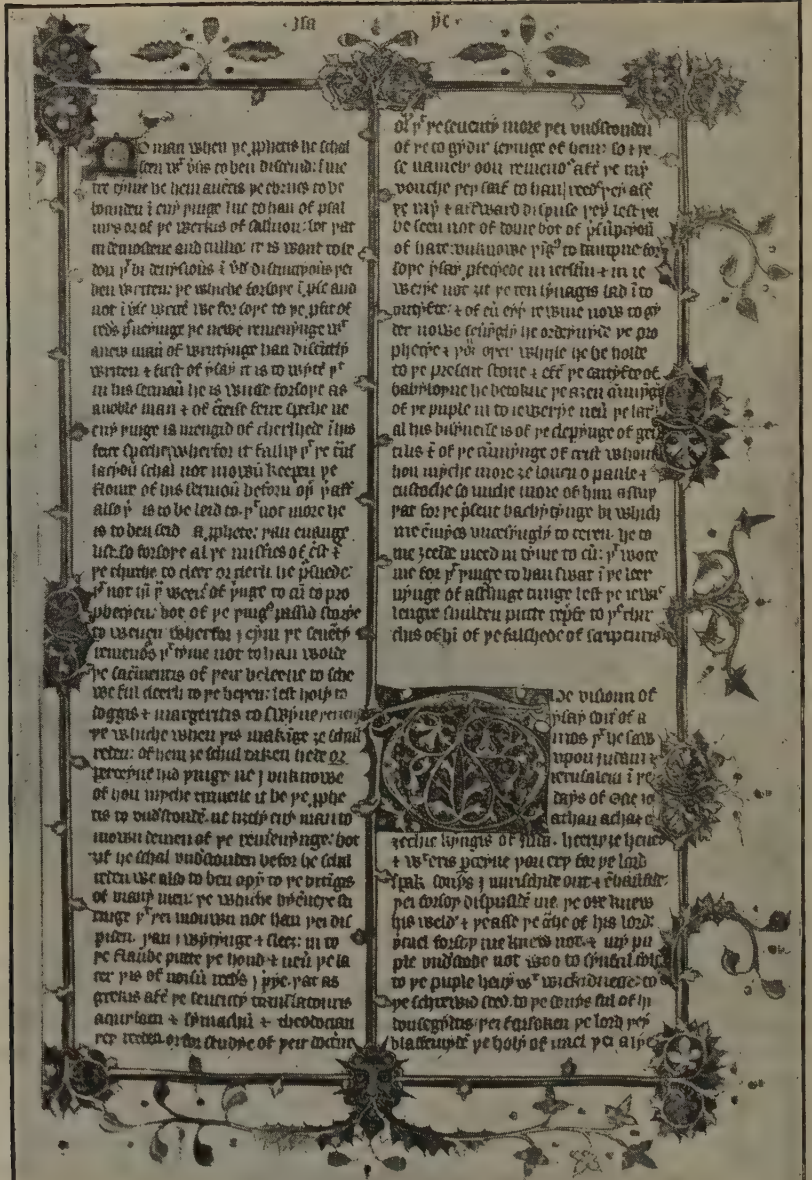
Chaucer gave little heed to these troublous events. Though busied in State duties, the source of his emoluments, he lived the inner life of a man of letters, detached and aloof from the storms of the world, studying and adapting to his own uses the new art-forms of French and Italian poetry, and finally, in the *Canterbury Tales*, making his mature art the obedient instrument of his native genius. His contemporary Langland seems in comparison to belong to another age and almost another race, so different was he in spirit—the voice of the poor incarnate, the voice of revolution, the chastiser of the vices, follies, and blasphemies that were rampant in the generation after Crécy. The court poet saw nothing of the crimes and oppressions that were evoking revolution ; the begetter of *Piers Plowman* saw little else. Gower was not so silent as his friend Chaucer ; he denounced the sins and follies of his contemporaries both in Latin and English, though his courtly conservatism was very different from the tone of Langland.



John Wyclif.
(From a portrait in King's College, Cambridge.)

Another voice of spiritual protest was that of the theologian, preacher, and ecclesiastical reformer, John Wyclif, the protagonist of a religious movement that was prophetic of the Reformation, and helped to prepare the way. At the age of forty, having a great reputation as a scholar and lecturer, he was master of Balliol College, Oxford (1360) ; and, through the democratic character of a mediæval university, commanded an influence in the world enormously wider than that of the most accomplished modern professor. His earlier writings are philosophical lectures in Latin, and it was in Latin that he took part in the violent controversy on papal taxation, and wrote his *De Veritate Sacræ Scripturæ* and other doctrinal works. The works in which he set the example of a strong, homely, and persuasive English prose were his evangelical pamphlets, breathing a fervent moral and religious spirit akin to Langland's, his sermons, and his translations of the Scriptures.

Wyclif was summoned before Convocation (1377) to answer for his attacks on



Wyclif's Folio Bible (Beginning of Isaiah).
(From the Egerton MS. in the British Museum.)

church endowments. He was supported by his patron, John of Gaunt, whose personal unpopularity, however, caused a riot, and the proceedings came to naught. Both king and Parliament, nevertheless, supported his resistance to the papal demands; and, when his enemies procured bulls from Rome formulating charges against him, the university refused to condemn Wyclif. Another riot took place, this time in his favour, when he was brought before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, who ordered him to desist from preaching his doctrines (1378), a command he did not obey. After the papal schism his opposition to the claims of the Roman see grew more determined; he described the Pope as Antichrist, and denounced the practices of the Church as in conflict with the original purity of the faith.

Wyclif was at length driven from Oxford, and retired to his parish work at Lutterworth; but he calmly defied the papal citation to Rome, and never relaxed either his crusade against papal demands and for Church reform, or his denial of transubstantiation and his preaching of a purer religion based on the Bible. His "Poor Priests" carried his teachings far and wide through the dioceses of Lincoln, Norwich, and Worcester, where there were afterwards many centres of Lollardy. They were accused of fomenting the Socialist tendencies that underlay the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. The social upheaval was stifled, but the seeds of religious reform brought forth fruit a century later, though the suppression of Wyclifism at Oxford extinguished not only religious freedom, but also all intellectual life in the university, until the coming of the New Learning. In the nation at large, moreover, the march of civilization was now interrupted by the long struggle of the Houses of Lancaster and York. The literary outburst had produced two great poets, one of them among our greatest, and several lesser poets, and was succeeded by the dullest period in our intellectual history. Its one permanent result was to have fixed the language. Chaucer's are the first works that we can still read with a sense that, however antique the form of his words, the vocabulary and the style are Modern English.

Chapter 2. GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Translations: *Roman de la Rose;* Boethius.—Minor Poems: *Death of Blanche the Duchess, Parliament of Fowls, Troilus and Criseyde, House of Fame, Legend of Good Women—Canterbury Tales*

Chaucer may be called the true founder of the line of English poets, as we give the title of founder of the family to that ancestor who first established it upon a firm basis of prosperity, and gave it a lasting influence and reputation. The full justification of this claim will be found by comparing Chaucer's poetry with the work of his predecessors, with the English of his contemporaries John Wyclif and the author of *Piers Plowman*, with the poetry of his immediate successors, and with the work and opinions of later poets—notably of Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Keats, and William Morris.

His greatness and national importance have never been in doubt from the first. Within twelve years of his death his follower, Thomas Hoccleve, wrote of him as "This londes verray tresour and richesse," and lamented his death in well-known stanzas:

> But wele away, so is myn herte wo,
> That the honoùr of English tounge is dead,
> Of which I was wonte have counseil and rede.
>
> O maister dere and fadir reverent,
> My maister Chaucer, floure of eloquence,
> Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
> O universal fadir in science,
> Allas! that thou thyne excellent prudence
> In thy bedde mortel myghtest not bequethe;
> What eyled Dethe? allas, why wold he sle the?
>
> O Dethe, that didest not harme singulere
> In slaughtre of hym, but alle this lond it smerteth,
> But natheles yit hast thou no powere
> His name to slee; his hye vertu asterteth
> Unsleyne fro the, which ay us lyfly herteth
> With bookes of his ornat endityng
> That is to alle this lond enlumynyng.

A hundred and eighty years afterwards, when Spenser is retelling and completing Chaucer's Squire's Tale, he sets forth on the adventures of Cambalo and Canace:

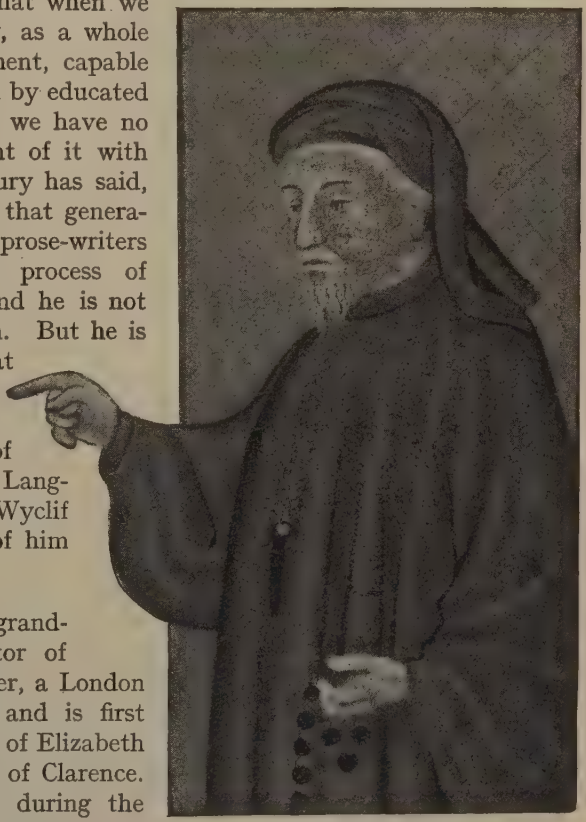
> As that renownèd poet them compiled
> With warlike numbers and heroicke sound,
> Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled
> On Fame's eternall bead-roll worthie to be fyled.

And fifty years later the same story of the same poet haunts the "divinest melancholy" of *Il Penseroso.*

Another fifty years, and Dryden utters his famous judgment to the same purpose, though in the tones of a different age:

> In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Virgil. . . . He has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. . . . 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *Here is God's plenty.* We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days: their general characters are still remaining in mankind and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of Monks and Friars, and Canons and Lady Abbesses and Nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature, though everything is altered.

Until we come to Shakespeare there is no other poet of whom anything like this could be said; and it follows that when we speak of English poetry to-day, as a whole tradition and a whole achievement, capable of being understood and enjoyed by educated Englishmen of any generation, we have no choice but to begin our account of it with Chaucer. As Professor Saintsbury has said, "Chaucer is not the earliest (of that generation of accomplished poets and prose-writers in whom culminates the long process of incubation and experiment); and he is not the only one worthy of attention. But he is by so much the greatest figure that he deserves to give, as he has always given, name to the period, and to have precedence of those who, like Gower possibly, Langland, if Langland it was, and Wyclif pretty certainly, had the start of him in literary performance."



Geoffrey Chaucer.
(From Thomas Hoccleve's poem, "De Regimine Principum," in the British Museum.)

Life.—Geoffrey Chaucer, the grandson of Robert Chaucer, Collector of Customs, and son of John Chaucer, a London vintner, was born about 1340, and is first heard of in 1357 in the household of Elizabeth de Burgh, wife of Lionel, Duke of Clarence. In 1359 he was taken prisoner during the war with France, and ransomed the next year by the aid of Edward III., in whose household he was (or became) a yeoman of the chamber, being granted in 1367 a pension of twenty marks for his services, and raised in or before 1369 to the rank of one of the king's esquires of less degree. During the next ten years he was employed on several diplomatic

missions, one of which in 1372 took him to Genoa, another in 1378 to Milan, and others to France and Flanders. In 1374 he was granted by the king a pitcher of wine daily (commuted for twenty marks a year), leased a house over the gate at Aldgate, was appointed Controller of the Customs and Subsidy of Wool and Hides in the Port of London, and received a pension of £10 from John of Gaunt for the services of himself and his wife Philippa, identified beyond serious doubt as a daughter of Sir Payne Roet. He received other grants in 1375 and 1376, the Controllership of the Petty Customs of the Port of London in 1382, and became a justice of the peace for Kent in 1385 and knight of the shire in 1386. At the end of that year he lost both his controllerships, and was henceforth less prosperous, save for two years (1389–91) during which he was clerk of the king's works at the palace of Westminster and Tower of London. In 1394 Richard II. granted him a new pension of £20, and in 1398 a yearly tun of wine; and in 1399 Henry IV. promised him an additional pension of forty marks. He died on October 25, 1400, in a house he had recently rented in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster, and was buried in St. Benet's Chapel (now known as Poets' Corner) in Westminster Abbey.

Works.—While in the king's household Chaucer translated the famous *Roman de la Rose*, or part of it, and wrote numerous love-poems. Some 1,700 lines of the existing version of the *Roman* may be his, but we have nothing that is both certainly his and certainly early work before the *Death of Blanche the Duchess*, commemorating the wife of his patron John of Gaunt, who died in November 1369. A *Complaint of the Death of Pity*, an *A B C* or hymn to the Blessed Virgin, a *Complaint to his Lady* (written in the metre of Dante's *Divina Commedia*), the *Legend of St. Cecilia, Tale of Constance, Tale of Grisilde*, and some of the short "Tragedies" afterwards assigned to the Monk in the *Canterbury Tales*, were all probably written in the next decade. To the years 1381–5 belong *Queen Anelida and False Arcite* (a fragment), the *Parliament of Fowls, Troilus and Criseyde* (based on Boccaccio's *Filostrato*), *House of Fame* (unfinished), story of *Palamon and Arcite* (based on Boccaccio's *Teseide* and revised as the Knight's Tale), and an uncompleted series of lives of Cupid's saints, with two versions of a delightful prologue, entitled the *Legend of Good Women;* also a prose translation of the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius. The idea of a great series of tales to be assigned to pilgrims travelling to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury now took shape, and save for a few *Balades* and a prose treatise on the *Astrolabe* (unfinished), all the rest of Chaucer's work went into this.

Chaucer primarily a Story-teller.—In the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, when Chaucer is accused by Cupid of heresy against love, it is pleaded on his behalf that he had made many a hymn for love's holiday, "that highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes." A charming roundel has come down to us embedded in the *Parliament of Fowls*, with the refrain

Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hath this wintres weders overshake
And driven awey the longe nyghtes blake.

A few "balades," all assignable to a fairly late date in his career, have a heavier and more laboured movement than his average verse, but they contain some of his noblest lines. The following is a stanza from his *Balade de Bon Conseyl:*

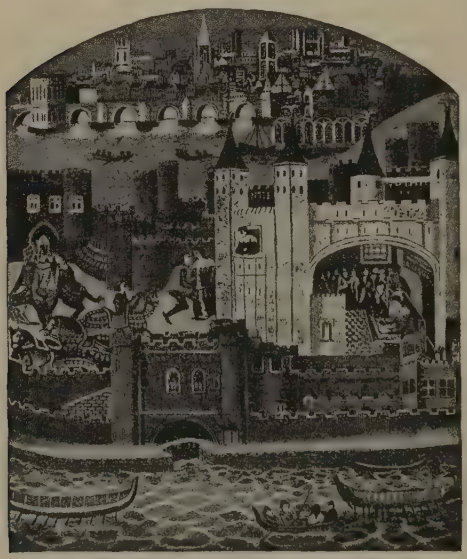
That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Here nis non hoom, here nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Since the early love-poems are lost we lack an essential witness, but on the evidence extant it seems unlikely that Chaucer at any time possessed either the technique or the temper of a lyrist. He introduces personal touches into many of his poems, sometimes charming, sometimes humorous; he philosophizes also on human affairs and the mysteries of existence, but these touches are incidental. He is always primarily a poet who has a tale to tell, and is bent on telling it in the best possible manner.

The Question of Invention.—But while Chaucer is primarily a story-teller, it seems equally clear that he had very little gift for what may be called the strategy of a plot. For the tactics of story-telling, the successful working out in detail of a borrowed central idea, he developed a real genius. But he had none of the amazing gift which enabled Scott, for instance, to plot story after story with hardly a suggestion save such hints as his own instinct set him to look for. The gift was rare in his day, witness the monotony of incident and the repetition in the romances, and the tendency of their writers to rehandle and extend old themes in place of devising new ones. We have twofold evidence that Chaucer did not possess it, firstly in the existence of either direct originals or analogues for almost all his stories, secondly in the survival of three poems, all of them begun when his powers were nearly or quite at their height, which he was apparently unable to complete. Before writing of "al the love of Palamon and Arcyte" in the tale assigned to the Knight in the Canterbury series, he tried to invent a variation of it in which Arcyte from the outset should forfeit the reader's sympathy by his falseness to a certain fair Anelida, and abandoned the attempt after occupying 357 lines in a very badly proportioned opening. In the *House of Fame*, after a wasteful prologue epitomizing the story of Troy from Virgil's *Æneid*, he imagines Jupiter to have sent an eagle to carry him through the air to the temple of the goddess, launches himself on a poem of description and moral comment, and then breaks off apparently for lack of a climax. To

point out these facts is to delimit, not to depreciate. "If the works of the great poets," says Lowell, "teach anything, it is to hold mere invention somewhat cheap. It is not the finding of a thing, but the making something out of it after it is found, that is of consequence. Accordingly Chaucer, like Shakespeare, invented almost nothing. Whenever he found anything directed to Geoffrey Chaucer, he took it and made the most of it. It was not the subject treated, but himself, that was the new thing."

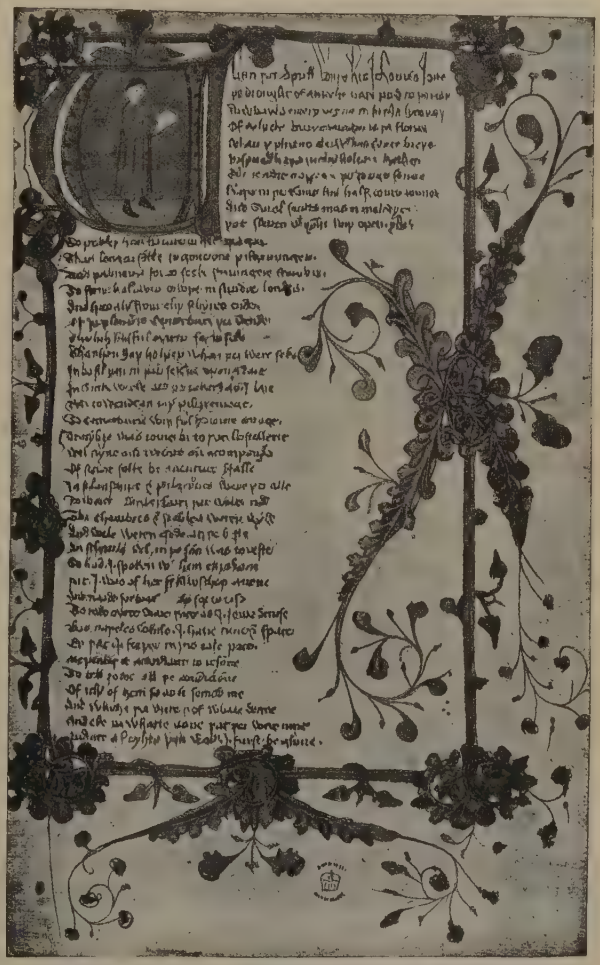
Work demanded by Court Occasions.—As a court poet Chaucer was bound to handle some themes for which no exact model could be found: John of Gaunt's wife died; Richard II. was contracted to be married; Richard's queen, so we are told, had procured the poet some relief from his official work, and had to be thanked. For each occasion a poem full of charm was produced, but the slightness of these poems and the use in each case of conventional forms are further proofs of the limits of Chaucer's invention as regards plot and matter. In the *Death of Blanche the Duchess* there is a finely written prologue on the poet's own lack of sleep and on dreams, introducing the story of Ceÿx and Alcyone from Ovid; then he dreams and sees himself wandering on a May morning in a forest, where he meets a mourning knight whom he questions with a perverse blindness as to the cause of his sorrow. In the *Parliament of Fowls* the machinery of the dream occupies nearly half the poem, and then we have three eagles pressing their love-suits, the opinions of the other birds, and the indeterminate ending which seems to have been the rule in these argumentative poems and in this case is supposed to fit in with a delay in the marriage of Anne of Bohemia (who had previously been courted by two other princely suitors) with Richard II. After the rather laboured prologue it is all very charming and very slight, and the charm and the slightness seem to go together. Yet once more, in the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, which, though both in form and substance a prologue, is also a delightful original poem, we have again a conventional beginning leading up to a dream in which the poet sees himself upbraided by Cupid for his traitorous writings, and interceded for by Alcestis, Love's queen, who yet sets him by way of penance to write year



The Tower of London in 1480.
(From an MS. of Charles, Duke of Orleans.)

by year a story of some faithful woman, to which the god adds a charge for a final legend of Alcestis herself. Nothing could be more gracefully told than this little scene, which has enough movement and colour in it to form the prelude to a masque.

Thus each of these ventures is a success up to a point, yet the fact remains that in the three most original poems which Chaucer produced, we have the dream basis used each time (and again in the *House of Fame*), and then a little song and some talk, and that is all. The man who out of his own head could produce no more of a story than we have in these three completed poems, and who lays his foundations so badly in the three uncompleted ones, might be reckoned a fine poet on other grounds, but as a story-teller, if this were all of his work still extant, we should be bound to judge him ineffective, or only capable of pretty trifles. And yet in the end Chaucer is one of our greatest story-tellers. How did he achieve his success?



Prologue, page 1, of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales."
(British Museum.)

The Apprenticeship of Translation.—Chaucer is a striking instance of a poet who persevered in hard work until he became a master of his craft. At the outset he was handicapped, not only by his lack of originality and constructive power, but by having to feel his way in the use of words—his "English," he tells us more than once, was "insufficient." He set to work as a translator, trying from time to time, as we have seen, to use his materials in original combinations, and finding himself driven again to keep his

hand on some clue provided for him in French, Latin, or Italian. But from the very first he possessed two great gifts, music and the ability to describe whatever he could see; and we soon find him abridging and selecting from his materials, enriching them now with philosophy, now with humour, and humanizing and making more dramatic the plots he borrowed, till at the last we feel that it is only the merest thread that he wants to guide him, and with that provided he can re-tell the story in his own way and his own words, and can tell it incomparably better than his authorities.

Music and Descriptive Power in Chaucer's Early Work.—The first metre which Chaucer mastered was the octosyllabic couplet, which he probably learnt to use by translating the *Roman de la Rose*. By 1369, when he made his first attempt at rearranging materials mainly borrowed, in the *Death of Blanche the Duchess*, he could already do what he liked with it. Consider the freedom in these half-dozen lines with their two monosyllabic and one trisyllabic first feet and the rise and fall of the verse :

Thus in this wyse
Soche a tempest gan to ryse
That brak hir mast and made it falle
And clefte hir ship, and dreinte hem alle,
That never was founden, as it telles,
Bord, ne man, ne nothing elles :
Right thus this King Seys loste his lyf.

Chaucer is translating, but he visualizes the scene for himself and writes with absolute freedom. What descriptive power again is shown, on a slightly larger scale, in the thirty-nine lines (153–91) in which Juno's messenger goes to wake the god of sleep !

Abridgment and Selection.—One of Chaucer's earliest essays in translation was the *Life of St. Cecile*, which is assigned in the *Canterbury Tales* to the Second Nun. For more than half his version he translates closely, only eking out his seven-line stanzas (imitated from the French of Machault) with little tags to help the rhymes. He even gives four stanzas to the amazing etymologies of Cecilia's name propounded by his author, Jacobus de Voragine. Then he gets tired of his Latin and finishes the story rapidly and vividly. So in the tale of Constance (from the Anglo-Norman of Trivet), when Constance is to make her second unlucky marriage he exclaims :

Me list nat of the chaff, ne of the stree
Maken so long a tale as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the roialtee
At mariage, or which cours goth biforn,
Who bloweth in the trumpe or in an horn ?
The fruyt of every tale is for to seye
They ete and drynke and daunce and synge and pleye.

(2,352)

There are many such explicit refusals of the opportunities for prolixity which the romancers so cheerfully embraced, and on a larger scale we should appreciate the sound instinct which turned the *Teseide* into " al the love of Palamon and Arcyte," omitting the war with the Amazons, and giving the story a unity and compactness not found in the original.

Enrichment.—While Chaucer recognized the value of swiftness in telling a story, he was no less alive to that of ornament. In the Knight's Tale he shortens the descriptions of three temples of Mars, Venus, and Diana, in which Arcite, Palamon, and Emily make their several prayers, but he does not cut them out. Moreover, to make his poems appeal not only to the lovers of a fine story but to more thoughtful listeners and readers, he adds ethical and philosophical passages from Latin, French, and Italian sources, more especially the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius. The moralizing is mostly very good in itself and good also as artistic relief. Now and again Chaucer goes astray in these additions, as in the 98-line " Complaint " of Dorigen (taken from St. Jerome's treatise *Contra Jovinianum*) with which he overloads the otherwise perfectly told Franklin's Tale. But nearly always he hits his mark.

Dramatic Power in Romance.—In romance Chaucer's two great successes are his *Troilus and Criseyde* (based on Boccaccio's *Filostrato*) and the Knight's Tale of *Palamon and Arcite* (based on the same poet's *Teseide*). In the *Troilus* he translates less than half of the 5,704 lines of his original and adds twice as much of his own, lengthening the whole poem to 8,246 lines, in 1,178 seven-line stanzas. The length injures the poem, but it is due not to mere prolixity, but to the sheer joy of the poet, who has at last been given a subject worthy of his powers. He had got his plot outlined for him, and he fills it in at his own discretion, ornamenting it from his reading in Dante, Petrarch, and Boethius, and investing Criseyde with a pathos, and Pandarus with a humour and worldly wisdom, of which there is little trace in his original. In transforming the *Teseide* into " al the love of Palamon and Arcyte " Chaucer kept a tighter hand on himself, using only some 770 of Boccaccio's lines, and completing the poem in 2,050 lines, or less than a quarter of the 9,054 of the Italian. The tale is thus a model of condensation, but Chaucer did much more for it than this. He wins sympathy for Palamon by making him see Emily before his cousin and emphasizing his single-mindedness in love, as contrasted with Arcite's desire for victory in arms. He gives fire to the story by making the two cousins quarrel fiercely over their respective claims to Emily's love while they are still in prison, and heightens and quickens every detail of their rivalry. From the escape of Palamon from prison to the arrangement for the tournament every touch is dramatic, and every touch is Chaucer's improvement on a much tamer original.

Realization of Character and Action.—In his rehandling of Boccaccio's two poems

Chaucer discovered his own powers. The command of the queen that he should write a lectionary of Cupid's saints forced him back in the *Legend of Good Women* on uncongenial themes, and in the Squire's Tale he made one more attempt at being his own plotter. But henceforth he knew that if he followed a story he had read or heard he could realize the characters in it for himself and know how they would talk and the details of the action by which they would carry out the plot. He had realized Palamon and Arcite and Theseus right nobly, Pandarus with consummate

Canterbury Pilgrims.
(By Thomas Stothard, R.A.)

art and humour, Criseyde with a great humanity. He needed to keep no book in front of him while he wrote ; all he needed was a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end, which he could rehandle in his own way. In the *Canterbury Tales*, stories told by pilgrims on the road to and from Canterbury, he gave scope to his gift for minute description in the Prologue, in which he tells of the assembling of a score and a half of travellers at the Tabard Inn at Southwark, of their agreement for the tale-telling, and their start for Canterbury. We may search literature for such another gallery of pictures in so small a space. When he lets his pilgrims talk on the road, as a change from tale-telling, the talks (unhappily incomplete) are inimitable in their ease and life. The whole poem is an historical document,

unsurpassable as evidence of the feeling and cultivation of Englishmen of the time.

Outlook on Life.—It is sometimes regretted that so much of the brilliant craftsmanship in Chaucer's later work was bestowed on very gross stories. But the stories are told so frankly that it is difficult to believe that any imagination has been stained by them, and it is clearly indicated that the exploits are the exploits of churls to which gentlefolk would only be attracted as illustrating how churls live. Chaucer himself was interested in how every one lived, was eager to speak to them, watch how they behaved, and note their clothes and the beasts they rode. He had learnt to use his eyes, and he liked using them at his leisure. It was no part of his plan to check the confidences of his fellow-travellers by untimely criticism. He was ready to call every rascal " a good felawe " if he would sit for his portrait. He admires goodness unstintedly—witness his sketches of the Knight, the poor Parson and his Ploughman brother, and the Clerk of Oxford ; but he was too much interested in his rascals, as in every one else, to condemn them save by a side-stroke here and there. Rather he is pleased to have met such clever rogues. They form part of a various and delightful world, on which he looks with all-including sympathy.

No Dramatist.—The life of Chaucer's world is distinguished by its happiness. There is pain in it, and perplexity, but there is neither agony nor rebellion. Fortune is fickle and all-powerful, but it is a good world and a field of joys. It follows that this poet could never have been a tragedian. To him, as to his Monk,

> Tragedie is non other maner thing . . .
> But for that Fortune alway wot assaile
> With unwar strook the regnès that been proude.
>
> *Canterbury Tales*, B. 3,950.

Of moral or spiritual tragedies, in the full sense, he knows nothing, but only of the material ones which Fortune can bring about, and to the victims of these he is very pitiful. It is no accident that the line " For pitee renneth sore in gentil herte " is three times adapted from Dante for his stories. The deep sense of tears in human life is constantly with him, and is always perfectly expressed—in the sorrow of Griselda at parting with her children, in the sorrow of Constance when her babe must share her danger, in the anguish of Ugolino when he cannot save his children from his own fate :

> Allas, Fortune ! it was greet crueltee
> Swiche briddes for to put in swiche a cage.
>
> *Canterbury Tales*, B. 3,603.

or in the grief of the little choir-boy's mother when she searches for her son " with moodres pitee in her herte enclosed." Most piercing of all, perhaps, are the dying words of Arcite to his love :

Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
What is this world? What asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any companye.

In a similar way he may be said to excel in comedy, as Meredith defines it: "the singular scene of charity issuing of disdain under the stroke of honourable laughter." But his comedy is not the art of the stage. "The true dramatist has a special relation to his personages; he has not merely observed them, he has made them, begotten them, endowed them with the very blood and breath by which he himself lives. However widely they may differ from him in character, part of him is reproduced in each of them; and it is in those reproductions alone that he is visible to his audience. Between Chaucer and the persons in his stories this relation does not exist; they do not always share his life, and he is never content to be lost and found in them. He is often simply a reporter, and always personally present with the audience. In short, his genius is essentially narrative."

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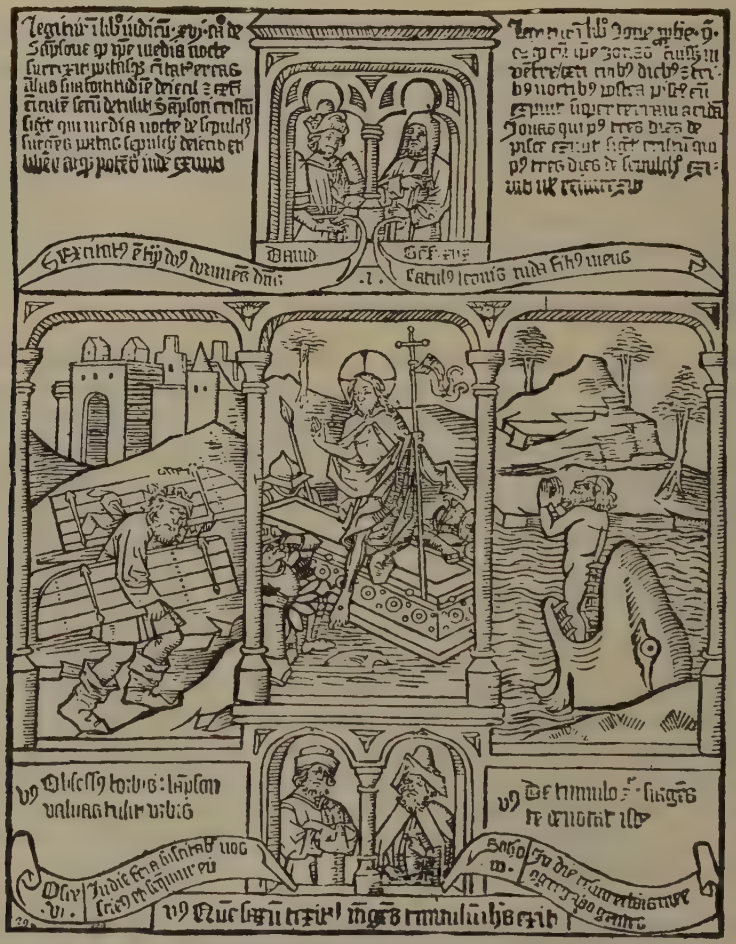
Chapter 3. PIERS PLOWMAN

Fourteenth-century England produced one of the great religious poems of all time. Noble in plan, vigorous in style, lofty in diction, *Piers Plowman* discloses the heart of a 14th-century scholar, earnest and pious, a reformer yet a good Catholic, an idealist yet a keen observer of reality, in a manner which has no parallel save in the *Divine Comedy*. The multitude and diversity of the manuscripts which are still extant, testify to the value placed upon the poem during the close of the Middle Ages. But while the author yet wrote, the old alliterative verse was dying, and the classicism which was to render his work archaic was at hand. And so, except to a few scholars and poets, his great work passed into an oblivion from which only the research of our own day has begun to rescue it.

The Author.—Of the author we know with certainty only what he has revealed incidentally in his work; and the extent of such knowledge is limited, for it is not yet settled how far we should interpret certain allusions as references to the personal history of the poet. He was certainly called William—he tells us so repeatedly; and from his tallness he got the nickname of "Long Will." Two 15th-century notes, and a number of 16th-century authorities, tell us his surname was Langland. From the most detailed of these notes, we learn that Langland was not his father's name, but that he belonged to the Rokayle family, which held land under the Despencers at Shipton, in Oxfordshire: and this early note is probably trustworthy, as the details it gives about the Rokayle family can be confirmed from other sources. The 16th-century tradition that the poet was born at Cleobury Mortimer, on the Welsh border, fifty miles from Shipton, may also be true, for the author may well have been born in the troubled times when the lands of adherents of the Despencers were being harried, and when there may have been the strongest reasons for the Rokayle family being from home. He knew London, and there is much in the character of the poem to confirm the statement made in the latest version that the poet was a chantry-clerk, making his living by singing *placebo* and *dirige*.

Character.—The dreamer tells us that he was loath to reverence lords and ladies, persons dressed in fur and wearing silver pendants; and that he never made obeisance with a "God save you" to the lawyers whom he met: so that folk held him a fool. "It requires no great stretch of imagination," says Skeat, "to picture to ourselves the tall gaunt figure of Long Will, in his long robes and with his shaven head, striding along Cornhill, saluting no man by the way, minutely observant of the gay dresses to which he paid no outward reverence."

His Work: A-Version.—The date of the first, or A-Version, of "The Vision of William concerning Piers Plowman," is fixed by internal evidence as 1362, or shortly after. This version consists of 12 (in three MSS. 13) sections. Of these the first 9 (Prologue and Passus I–VIII) form one complete work, to which may be given the



A page from the "Biblia Pauperum."

title *The Field of Folk.* Part II. (*The Vision of Do-well, Do-bet, and Do-best*) was unfinished: the last three sections are accordingly but a fragment of the yet greater poem which was to be completed many years later.

We know the reasons for William's temporary abandonment of Part II. He had

come to have doubts as to the use of writing and learning. Solomon, the example of the wise and just ruler; Aristotle, greatest of scholars—who wrought better? And yet "All Holy Church holds them to be in Hell." It is better, so he has come to think, to be one of the ignorant who "pierce with a Paternoster the palace of Heaven." With these words the earlier version breaks off.

The poet has found no solution of his quest. He is faced with the same problem which so long held Dante hungering, and for which Dante found on earth no solution.[1] Where is the justice which condemns a man even though he have led a life blameless in act and word? It was because he was overwhelmed with the difficulties of his task that William left it unfinished, and was tempted by "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes," and that "pride of life" which makes a man think lightly of learning.

But many years later, in old age and poverty, he returned to his earlier interests. And, his spiritual difficulties at last solved, he completed the great poem which he had planned long before. Such at any rate is the account which the poet himself gives of how and why he had so long delayed the completion of his task; and though it may be disputed how far the poet's confessions are to be interpreted as strictly autobiographical, we have numerous manuscripts extant to testify that some time after 1362 the work was abandoned unfinished, and some sixteen manuscripts to show that it was taken up again about 1377.

B-Version.—The B-Version consists of 21 sections. In this revised version the plan of Part I. is untouched. There are a fair number of additions, taken from the poet's larger experience of men and manners and further illustrative of his theme. Best known among these additions is of course the celebrated political fable of the rats and mice and the cat.

The theme of Part I. is the world of realities, imperfect humanity which has its "worship in this world." In this part the dreamer rests and sees the real life pass before him.

Outline of the Poem: The B-Recension of A.—Part I. "*The Field of Folk.*"

Prologue. *The poet, after wandering wide, rests on Malvern Hills and sleeps. And in his dream he is in a wilderness. In the eastern sky is a wondrous tower, and beneath it a deep dale with a dreadful dungeon; while between is a "fair field of folk," of all manner of men going about their daily work. In crisp phrase the poet draws a vivid picture of 14th-century life, good and bad. He shows us the ploughman and the merchant, the lawyer and the cook, and many other crafts. He shows us the king's position in the state: "Then came there a king. Knighthood him led. Might of the people made him to reign." But his most vigorous work is his portrait of professional men of religion, slack and dishonest, forsakers of Charity (Love) for profit.*

[1] *Paradiso*, xix. 25, etc.; *cf. Purgatorio*, iii. 43.

Passus I. *A "lovely lady," Holy Church, appears and expounds the meaning of the vision, and its lesson. The tower is the abode of Truth, or God the Father; and God is Love. The dungeon is the abode of Wrong, or the Devil, the adversary of Truth and Love. And the lesson of Holy Church is that "Wher all treasures are tried, Truth is the best," and that "Love is the leech (physician) of life, and next Our Lord self, And also the graith gate (straight path) that goeth into Heaven."*

Passus II, III, and IV. *Holy Church shows him the vision of "Meede." "Meede," the maiden, is by the scheming of Flattery, Liar, Guile, and their company, to be given in marriage to Falsehood. Flattery leads forth the bride, the contract is witnessed, and "In the date of the Devil this deed is assealed, By sight of Sir Simony and Civil's leave." But Theology protests that Meede is of good family and should be wedded to Truth himself, and not to a bastard of Beelzebub. Let her be taken to London for the law to decide the case. Meede is willing, and Falsehood and his supporters also consent, confident of their skill in bribery and subornation. Accordingly the party sets out for Westminster.*

Meantime Conscience is informed of the scheme and reports to the king, who orders the arrest of Falsehood and Flattery and the punishment of their supporters. The culprits are warned and make their escape. Guile finds refuge among tradesmen. Liar finds no ready welcome, "Till pardoners had pity and pulled him into house. They washed him and wiped him, and wound him in clouts, And sent him with seals on Sundays to churches, And he gave pardon for pence, poundmeal about." Then leeches, spicers, and minstrels in turn urge their hospitality upon him, and finally the friars make him free of their community.

Meede alone does not attempt to escape, and is duly arrested, but afforded comfortable quarters by the king's command. Here she is visited by justices and by "clerks" who promise to work her will. The former she rewards with gold and rich gifts, the latter with assurance of her interest at Court.

Then comes a confessor, "coped as a friar." He makes no difficulty about shriving the lady, and then urges her to make quite certain of her salvation by paying for a stained-glass window. At this point the poet has some reflections to make which are not out of date now, some 546 years later: on ostentatious almsgiving, and on mayors and other persons of position who for Meede's love neglect to punish tradesmen who grow rich and buy rents at the expense of the poor.

Meede is brought before the king, who offers to forgive her guilt if she will wed his knight Conscience, who has just returned from service abroad. The lady is willing, but Conscience indignantly refuses, charging her with the murder of King Edward II. and with other crimes. She makes a most witty and able defence, putting forward an equally lengthy list of her virtues, and referring to

the help she gave the king in his French wars, and to the further help which she would have given, had not Conscience intervened. "There may no wight, as I ween," she concludes, "without Meede live." The king inclines to her point of view. But Conscience demonstrates that there are two kinds *of "Meede." The one, good, is God's reward of good works; the other, evil, "maintains misdoers" and calls forth God's vengeance. The reign of this evil "Meede" shall give place to that of Love and Humility and Loyalty.*

The king gets impatient, and orders Conscience to stop talking and to kiss the lady. He refuses downright, unless Reason advises it. So he is sent to fetch Reason, whom the king receives courteously and gives a seat on the Bench between himself and his son. Together they deal with an action brought by Peace against Wrong (in a passage which might justly be called the epic counterpart of the Trial of Mr. Pickwick); and then Reason decides against Meede, and the king assents to his judgment and resolves that Reason and Conscience shall be his counsellors.

Passus V and VI. *The dreamer awakes and goes on his journey, but after a few steps falls faint and sleeps again. And again he sees the Field of Folk, to whom now Reason, "with a cross before the king," preaches honest work and duty and love of one's neighbour and search after God.*

Then follows the confession of the Seven Deadly Sins. A few short quotations are given below (somewhat modernized): the finest passages are too long to be quoted.

Avarice.

"Hast thou ne'er repented," quoth Repentance, "nor restitution made?"
"Yes, once I was harboured," quoth he, "with an heap of chapmen.
I rose when they were a-rest, and rifled their males."[1]
"That was no restitution," quoth Repentance, "but a robber's theft;
Thou hadst been better worthy be hanged therefore
Than for all that that thou hast here shewed."
"I weened rifling were restitution," quoth he, "for I learned ne'er read on book,
And I can[2] no French, in faith, but of the farthest end of Norfolk."

Gluttony. *Glutton on his way to church is waylaid by Betty the barmaid and enticed into an alehouse. There he spends a happy day with Cissy the shoemaker's wife, Tim the tinker and two of his prentices, the Clerk of the Church, a rat-catcher, a Cheapside scavenger, Hicke the hackneyman, and other choice company. He drinks with them until*

He might neither step nor stand ere he his staff had.
And then gan he go[3] like a gleeman's bitch
Sometime a-side and sometime a-rear,
As whoso layeth lines for to latch[4] fowls.

The tavern scene is an exceedingly fine thing, though the meat be strong to the delicate modern palate.

[1] Baggage. [2] Know. [3] Walk. [4] Catch.

Sloth.

I can [1] not perfectly my paternoster as the priest it singeth;
But I can [1] rhymes of Robin Hood and Randolf Earl of Chester,
But of Our Lord and of Our Lady not the least that e'er was made.

. . . . . .

I have been priest and parson passing thirty winters,
Yet can neither solfe [2] nor sing, nor Saints' Lives read;
But I can find in a field or in a furlong an hare.

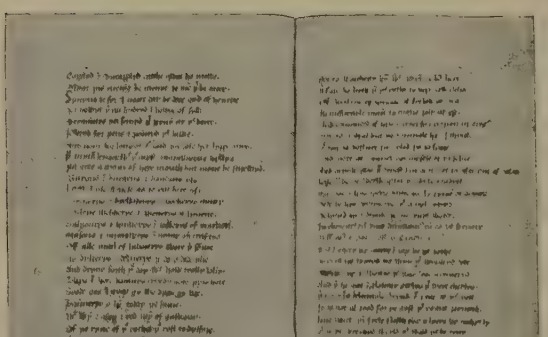
Repentance prays for all these sinners, and

A thousand of men then thronged together,
Cried upward to Christ, and to his clene [3] mother
To have grace to go with them Truth for to seek.

No one knows the way, nor can a wide-travelled palmer help them—

I saw never palmer with pike nor with scrip
Ask after Him ere, till now in this place.

And now at last Piers Plowman comes upon the scene and offers to direct the wanderers, who ask him to go with them as their guide. He performs this office in effect by setting them all to work. He has some trouble with slackers, who will listen neither to him nor to the knight who has agreed to help him maintain order. Hunger for a time deals more effectively with the "wastours"; but after he is well fed and has dropped off to sleep, they refuse to work, and all the people demand luxurious food and higher wages.



Two pages of Piers Plowman.
(British Museum.)

Passus VII. *Truth hears of what Piers is doing, and sends him a Pardon for himself and his heirs and for all who work honestly, whether labourers, clerics, knights, or kings, or even lawyers.*

A priest asks to see this Pardon, offering to interpret it into English. He finds the document to be an injunction to do well; *and this he declares is no Pardon at all.*

Piers in vexation tears the Pardon asunder. It is clear that his vexation is really directed against himself. He reflects that

We should not be too busy about the world's bliss;

[1] Know. [2] Sol-fa. [3] Pure.

and so he exclaims

I shall cease of my sowing and swink[1] not so hard,
And about my belly-joy so busy be no more.
Of prayers and of penance my plough shall be hereafter.[2]

The meaning of this difficult passage is now clear. Piers has suddenly realized that *Do-well*, the life of honest labour, which has hitherto been his earnest aim, is not enough. Implicit in the passage is the higher ideal which the poet was to depict later under the name of *Do-bet*. The priest, naturally enough, regards Piers' action with some supercilious surprise, and the ensuing strife of words wakens the dreamer,

Meatless and moneyless on Malvern Hills.

Then come the concluding lines of Part I. In these the poet, while not denying the power of the Pope to grant pardon, emphasizes the importance of Do-well.

Accordingly Part II. ("Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best") begins by telling how the poet roamed about all the summer season in search of Dowel. He meets two friars, and they tell him that Dowel dwells among them: but this statement leaves the searcher incredulous. He walks on, by a wood-side—

Bliss of the birds made me to abide.
Under a linden on a lawn leaned I a while,
To list to the lays that lovely fowls made;
Mirth of their mouths made me there to sleep.
The most marvellous dreaming, dreamed I then.

A tall man like himself, calls him by name. The man is "Thought"—his own thought. Thought defines Dowel as the truthful life of an honest, godfearing man. Dobet, he says, is Charity (not merely the charity which distributes wealth, but the charity which enters a religious order and preaches the duty of long-suffering toleration). Dobest is the righteous rule of God's Church:[3] *so Dobest bears a bishop's crozier, with power to push adown the wicked. William wants to know more, so Thought introduces him by name to Wit. In due course the poet is sent on to Clergy (Learning) and Scripture (Writing). But he is in no mood to accept their teaching. As we have seen, he had come to doubt the value of learning. And so in the first, or A-Version, the search for Dowel broke off with those hasty words in which the poet expressed doubts to which he can find no answer, and to which "Clergy" does not attempt to reply.*

The B-Continuation.—*The second, or B-Version, continues the story, first explaining how the search for Dowel had been dropped. For two* passus, *however, the search seems yet to stand still, whilst the spiritual difficulties with which the A-Text had suddenly ended are discussed. At last the dreamer, having expressed his shame and having had all his difficulties satisfactorily explained, is invited by Conscience to meet "Clergy" once more, at a dinner where the other guests are*

[1] Toil. [2] Henceforth. [3] Dobest had been so defined in A. xi. 195.

Patience and a gluttonous doctor, who lays down the law on every subject, from the nature of "Dowel" to the prospects of international peace. "All the wit of this world," says the doctor,

> "Cannot conform a peace between the pope and his enemies;
> Nor between two Christian kings can no wight peace make
> Profitable to either people." And he put the table from him.

Conscience decides to accompany Patience as a pilgrim, and in their wanderings they meet Hawkyn the Active Man: a type of the industrious but not necessarily blameless Christian worker (Dowel). Patience proves to Hawkyn that Charity is better than even the righteous earning and just spending of money—in other words, that Dobet is more pleasing to God than Dowel.

Accordingly the poet devotes the next four passus, *entitled "Dobet," to the search for Charity. Where can it be found? he asks.*

> I have lived in the land, said I, my name is Long Will,
> And I found never full charity before nor behind.
> Men will have mercy on the mendicants and poor;
> And will lend money when they believe they will be loyally repaid.
> But the Charity that Paul praiseth——

The poet is assured that only by the help of Piers Plowman can Charity be found; and the search for Charity under the person of Piers Plowman, who now reappears, is continued till it culminates in the supreme example of Charity—the life of Christ. The Crucifixion is described:

> The Lord of light and life then laid his eyes together.

Then comes the rescue of the souls of the just, when Christ descends into Hell and summons its guardians:

> Dukes of this dim place anon undo the gates
> That Christ may come in, the King's son of Heaven.

And the poet awakes to hear the sound of the Easter bells, and to exclaim:

> Arise and reverence God's resurrection,
> And creep to the cross on knees and kiss it for a jewel,
> For God's blessed body it bore for our good.
> May no griesly ghost glide where it shadoweth.

In the next passus *the poet goes on to tell how the risen Christ established His Church, and gave power to Piers to remit sin—Piers here representing in the first place St. Peter, but also Piers Plowman (the Church) generally. In thus establishing His Church He passed from Dobet to Dobest. This is in accordance with the definition given fifteen years before, by which Dobet signified the life of perfect charity, Dobest the righteous rule of the Church. These two final* passus *are accordingly entitled "Dobest," and they deal with Church government. It is this section of the poem, more particularly, which led John Richard*

Green to speak of the "terrible despair" of the author—a somewhat misleading phrase. "Dobest" takes us quickly into the struggle of Piers (the Church) against Antichrist. Conscience, true to his character of soldier-preacher, draws his followers together into Unity Holy Church, where for some time they make successful resistance, till one Friar Flattery, a surgeon, gains admission, and salves the defenders to sleep under pretence of healing their wounds. Conscience alone remains steadfast and vigilant, and it is with the despairing cry of Conscience in his ears that the poet awakes:

I will become a pilgrim
And walk as wide as all the world lasteth
To seek Piers the Plowman.

C-Text.—So the poem ends, not only in the second, or B-Version, but also in a later revision, the C-Text, issued at least ten years, and possibly more, after the B-Version. Many of the alterations in this C-Text are not improvements, and how far they are due to the poet's revision, how far to the revision of some one else, and how far to scribes, has still to be determined.

A contemporary but not very authoritative writer tells us that before the end of the reign of Richard II. the poet was dead. But there is no reason to suppose, because the poem ends in disaster and defeat, that therefore it breaks off imperfect. How, in the days of the Great Schism, could the poet tell the tale of Unity Holy Church (and that is, essentially, what *Piers Plowman* is) save with a broken heart?

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Chapter 4. CHAUCERIAN POETS

Gower—Lydgate—Hoccleve—Hawes

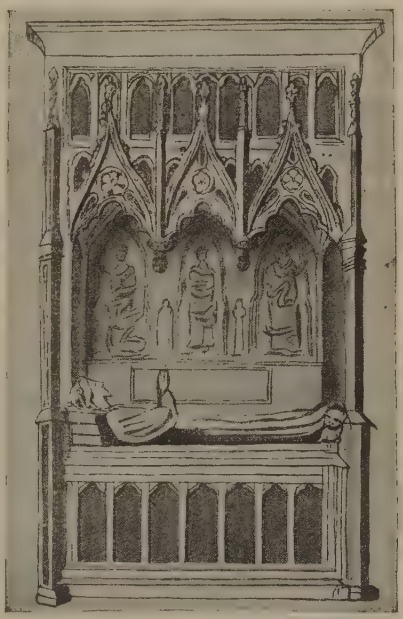
JOHN GOWER (*c.* 1330–1408)

Life.—John Gower was the best-known and most voluminous contemporary of Chaucer, but very little is handed down about his personal life. He was a man of good family and of good position, apparently a Kentish landowner, the possessor besides of manors in Norfolk and Suffolk, which he leased to others while he himself lived mostly in London. He was well known to King Richard II., at whose suggestion his chief poem was written ; but towards the end of his life he transferred his sympathies to the more energetic star of Bolingbroke. The rebellion of the peasants in 1381 filled him with fear and disgust, and he certainly did not approve of Richard's promises to the rebels. He was not in holy orders, though at one time he was in charge of the living of Braxted, in Essex. Late in life he married Agnes Groundolf, of whose care in his feeble old age he made grateful recognition. About 1401 he became blind, and spent the last years of his life in the priory of St. Mary Overy, where he died in 1408. His tomb may still be seen in St. Saviour's, Southwark ; it was originally an elaborate one, and the head of the poet's effigy lies on his three longest works. As the tomb seems to have been designed by himself, it is evident that he held himself and his poetry in good esteem.

Works.—The three works mentioned were, in order of composition, *Speculum Meditantis*, in French ; *Vox Clamantis*, in Latin (*c.* 1381) ; and *Confessio Amantis*, in English (*c.* 1385–93). Besides these we have *Cinquante Balades*, fifty love-poems in French, which were probably the work of his early years, though they were not published till a dedication to Henry IV. was appropriate ; the *Cronica Tripertita*, a historical poem in Latin, dealing with the troubles that led to the deposition of Richard ; and an English poem *In Praise of Peace*, in seven-line stanzas.

That Gower was a scholar and a writer of no ordinary range his long poems in three different languages show quite clearly. All his work, even the comparatively light *balades*, is didactic in aim, never merely literary ; he wished to instruct, much more than to amuse. In this way he forms a complete contrast with Chaucer, who was a poet *pur sang* and had no didactic reservations in his mind. The two poets were known to one another : in 1378 Chaucer, while on one of his missions abroad, named Gower as one of his representatives at home ; and later dedicated *Troilus and Criseyde* to the " moral Gower," whose name and friendship he obviously valued.

There is no direct evidence that they ever quarrelled, though the *Confessio* and the *Canterbury Tales* do come into some sort of rivalry, and the methods of the two were obviously diverse. Gower, however, was a successful man in the worldly sense, and had no occasion for jealousy. He was an aristocrat in his sympathies, bitterly hostile to the peasantry and to the reformers. His *Vox Clamantis* contains some violent satire of recreant clergy and friars, but it is the rabble of artisans and villeins who followed Wat Tyler that really moved him: in these respects he is equally remote from the bitter zeal of *Piers Plowman* and the genial humour of Chaucer He was the poet of the nobility, the voice of that scornful superiority to everything that was simply English which had been the pose of the Norman and Plantagenet two centuries earlier and was then at the point of extinction. It was not till quite late in life, and at the express injunction of the king, that he wrote in English, and even then he had his doubts about the effect of the change on his literary reputation.



Gower's Tomb in St. Saviour's, Southwark.
(From a print in the British Museum.)

The *Speculum Meditantis*, or in its French title *Mirour de l'Omme*, was not known till 1895, when a manuscript of it was discovered in the University Library at Cambridge. It is a very long poem, extending to 30,000 lines, in the corrupt dialectal form of French which was still in use among the great Norman families. Its method is that of the French allegory, and its content a picture of the vices of the time, the nature of man, and the remedy for sin to be found in devotion to Christ and the Virgin. The poem is not without value or interest, particularly in the light it throws on the social condition of England and of London especially. The denunciations of fraud, hypocrisy, luxury, and idleness do not lack vigour or sincerity. The same value must be attached to the Latin *Vox Clamantis*, though to this poem is added the interest obtained from its political attitude; this part of the theme is developed with fullness and force. But the greatest interest will naturally attach to the *Confessio Amantis*, which is not so predominantly didactic. The poet is still a severe moralist, but his theme now is Love, and his method that of the story-teller. The framework is allegorical, but the contents are realistic. The lover, examined by Genius on behalf of Venus, explains all the vices that may accompany love. He uses the Seven Deadly Sins as his headings, but he is not content with abstract disquisitions and illustrates each

vice by a concrete story. The stories are in general very well told, plainly and easily, without undue digressions; the author reveals his acquaintance with Ovid and the mediæval amorists; the result is a curious blend of the religious moralist with the frank mediæval tale-teller. Gower's verse flows on smoothly and fluently, and we can read his tales without undue excitement, but with an agreeable ease that explains their long popularity. He is not the equal of Chaucer in variety of rhythm; he has none of his humour, no share of his dramatic gift, no enchantment, no impulse of creative force, no striking originality. But he was a man of high accomplishments, worthy and serious in his personal character, a good honest artisan in verse; and in his one great English work he has shown that he can charm us as the straightforward narrator of pointed and skilfully chosen tales can always do. The *Confessio Amantis*, on this ground we may suppose, attracted Caxton, who printed it in 1483, possibly before the *Canterbury Tales*.

JOHN LYDGATE (*c.* 1370–*c.* 1447)

Life.—One of the first poets to acknowledge a discipleship to Chaucer, John, the monk of Bury St. Edmunds, was born in Suffolk, probably at the village of Lydgate which gave him his name. Very little is definitely known about his life; but he became a priest about 1397, and had much earlier become attached to the Benedictine abbey of Bury, where most of his days seem to have been spent. The traditions of his life declare that he was educated at Oxford, and travelled on the Continent, in France and Italy; but the latter at least seems unlikely, as his works give no evidence of any wide knowledge of the world. His "testament" or confession speaks of a wild and unregulated youth, addicted to "vain pleasures"; and even as a monk there was in him a conflict between the duties of his station and the attractions of life itself, in which the victory was generally won by the nobler ideal, though not without scars. But the long tale of his works is sufficient warrant of an untiring and plodding industry; and their moral significance is never wholly eclipsed by their literary attractions. From the voluminous mass of these writings, many of which are inaccessible now, it is clear that idleness did not claim many days of his long life. He was patronized by kings and nobles, especially by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who died mysteriously while on a visit to the monastery of Bury in 1447. After this date no more is heard of Lydgate, and it is thought that he too perished on the same mysterious occasion.

Works.—Lydgate's works are very numerous, and some of them very lengthy; it is quite impossible to enumerate them all, or to assign dates to any but a few, and those are only approximate guesses. Of the more ambitious poems we may mention *The Storie of Thebes* (*c.* 1415 ?); *The Troye Book* (*c.* 1420); *The Falls of*

Princes (*c.* 1423–33). Among the others are *The Temple of Glass*, a tedious love-allegory; *Guy of Warwick;* religious poems like *The Life of Our Lady;* saints' lives like *Edmund and Fremund, Albon and Amphabel, St. Margaret;* beast-fables like *The Churl and the Bird;* and a large number of shorter poems like *London Lickpenny* and *December and July*. This list is far from complete. A large number of occasional poems, such as the lives of St. Edmund and St. Alban, might have been included; for Lydgate was ready to adapt his poetic power to any occasion or to any subject. He was the journeyman-poet of his time, who could always be appealed to for a copy of verses.

Lydgate was, in matters of metre and inspiration, an enthusiastic imitator and admirer of Chaucer; but this fact, however praiseworthy in one sense, was his undoing as a poet. His environment and his training had left him a different man altogether from Chaucer; and his original gifts made it impossible that he should succeed in a mere following of the master. He never successfully caught the secret of Chaucer's rhythm; and though many echoes of Chaucerian phrases and ideas meet us in his poems, we are never deluded into a doubt about their origin. No poem of Lydgate's could possibly be ascribed to Chaucer. He shows at times a pleasant faculty for nature-description; but he cannot sustain a high note through many lines. He had no ear for melody and no precise principle of scansion; his heroic couplets and rhyme-royals rarely remain long true to the spirit of the metres. He had no self-criticism, no sense of artistic proportion. All his long poems are therefore intolerably tedious to read. We cannot endure their interminable verbosity, their flat and uninspired prolixity. Lydgate, in fact, suffered from a fatal facility in verse-making, which was never checked by suitable self-knowledge or by any outside criticism. In an age barren of great poetry he was highly valued, because he was almost alone.

The Storie of Thebes purports to be a new Canterbury Tale, the first to be told on the return journey. It amplifies the Knight's Tale, by giving the whole story of which that poem is a part; its matter is drawn from a French version of the *Thebaid* of Statius, and is versified in heroic couplets, which are in many mechanical points reminiscent of Chaucer's, but wholly fail as a vehicle of dramatic narrative in Lydgate's hands. The knight who told the story of Palamon and Arcite would never have owned this dry and inartistic production. The *Troye Book* is even more ambitious, and does for *Troilus and Criseyde* what he had already done for the Knight's Tale. It is a poem of great length, telling the whole Troy legend as it was known in the Middle Ages, from the *Trojan History* of the Italian Guido delle Colonne. Again, the length and unevenness of the poem are fatal to any enjoyment of it to-day; but its great popularity shows that it possesses qualities that appealed to the mediæval mind. The fullness of detail and the absence of the Greek atmosphere would be virtues in a feudal baron's hall, where poetic refinement would not carry so much weight. Again, in *The Falls of Princes*, did Lydgate expatiate upon a poem of Chaucer's—this time on the Monk's Tale. This might have grown tedious, it

will be remembered, but for the host's impatience. It is said that it was Duke Humphrey who commissioned this work from Lydgate, who was again little more than a translator of a French version of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Illustrium Virorum ;* he tells the procession of dismal stories at great length in the seven-lined rhyme-royal (see *post*, James I. of Scotland, p. 35), which he manages with some skill. It is probably his best work on the whole : it gave him frequent opportunities for agreeable descriptions, for moral reflection, for pathos, of which he took advantage ; but it

Initial Letter from an English Illuminated Bible of the 14th Century, showing an early bookcase with the books lying flat.

has also weary pages of laborious versifying, which it is difficult to understand so ardent a Chaucerian being able to tolerate. Some of the shorter poems are more successful in recalling their inspirer, and the *Complaint of the Black Knight* has been included in certain editions of Chaucer's works. In one respect—namely, in versatility—Lydgate approaches Chaucer. His minor poems are often quite happy, though they are never likely to excite any one to excessive admiration. Most of the verses written " to order " are of poor quality, though the life of St. Edmund, written *con amore* at the command of Henry VI., is not entirely without interest. Once, in *London Lickpenny*, he showed a turn of humour which might have been

advantageous to his longer works. Few of his works, however, came from him so spontaneously as this short poem. It was his misfortune to write at the dictate of others, rarely from an inward impulse towards poetry. He was the public poet of his time, an uncrowned laureate who could not resist the command of uncritical patrons in high places.

THOMAS HOCCLEVE (*c.* 1370–*c.* 1450)

Life.—A disciple of Chaucer who enjoyed a personal acquaintance with his master, Thomas Hoccleve, or Occleve, was a native of London, though born at some village from which he took his name—possibly Hockliffe, near Dunstable, in Bedfordshire. A pleasant poem entitled *La Male Règle de T. Hoccleve* (1406) contains an elaborate confession of youthful dissipations, which is doubtless truthful in the main, though such confessions were conventional enough in the poetry of the time. Through life he was a valetudinarian, and complains of stooping shoulders and pale face; but his habits as well as his occupation accentuated his defective health. In 1387 he entered political service in the office of the Privy Seal, and seems to have maintained his connection with the government throughout his life. In 1399 he was awarded a pension of £10, which was increased to £13, 6s. 8d. in 1409; but poems and *balades* survive to show that he was, like his master Chaucer, often in debt and ready to apply plaintively for relief. Of the last years of his life nothing is known, but the date 1446 has been assigned to one of his minor poems, and his life may therefore have been as long as Lydgate's.

Works.—Hoccleve's works are numerous, but not all of them have been printed, and he did not enjoy Lydgate's high reputation. The longest of those which are now accessible is *The Gouvernail of Princes* (1411–12), a translation of the Latin work of an Italian scholar, Ægidius, called *De Regimine Principum*. The poem was done into English for the benefit of the sons of Henry IV., and is of very unequal interest. It is not unduly long, and the rhyme-royal stanzas are easy and fluent, though never rising to any distinction of style. The introduction, which is a dialogue between the poet and an old man brought to poverty by his vices, contains a good deal of interesting personal matter, which reveals Hoccleve as an egotistic and fussy individual, naïvely garrulous, like the communicative Pepys; the well-known passage on the death of Chaucer is by no means deficient in dignity and pathos. The main body of the poem is didactic and devoted to moral instruction; it gives much wise advice to the Prince of Wales, who appears here in a very favourable guise. All the same, Hoccleve is no mere toady, though his personal interests were at stake. While he praises the prince for his devotion to learning, he also sings the glories of peace. By numerous examples, culled from his wide reading and from his personal experiences, he enforces his lessons, and the career of Henry V. may have owed something to them. The poem can be read without undue toil. Of his other works, we may mention *La Male Règle* for its personal touches; also a

Complaint and a *Dialogue* which owe such interest as they have to the same feature; *Cupid's Letter*, a dull and pedantic apology for the peculiarities of women; two tales—*Jonathas* and *The Emperor Gereslaus' Wife*—which are not ill-told; a fine poem on *The Mother of God*, which was long ascribed erroneously to Chaucer; and his poetical appeal to Sir John Oldcastle, urging him to withdraw his fine talents from the support of Lollards, heretics, and traitors.

Character.—Hoccleve's personal character seems to have been weak and timorous, but outspoken and direct on occasions. He was a zealous supporter of the orthodox faith, a serious moralist, and a loyal subject of the "noble Henries." He had no great poetic powers, and made no pretence of originality. It is to his credit, as to Lydgate's, that he recognized the supremacy of Chaucer in the literary sphere; it was not his fault that he had not the brilliancy of the leading star in the firmament. He did what learning and toil could do to atone for the niggardliness of nature. Unfortunately it was not enough to preserve the attention of later generations. Let us add that he adorned one of his manuscripts with a priceless portrait of his adored exemplar, the only one which survives.

STEPHEN HAWES (1474–5—*c.* 1530)

The last of the English mediæval poets was a man of very considerable learning, but of very narrow poetic gift. In Stephen Hawes, the allegorical romance as developed by Chaucer and Lydgate expired through mere lack of breath. In justice to Hawes, however, two facts must be remembered. He had, in the first place, to deal with the language in a state of uneasy transition. The use of the final *-e* and the pronunciation of foreign words, both of which were quite definite in Chaucer's day, had fallen into uncertainty by the end of the 15th century, and it may be that Hawes's metrical infelicities are in part due to his different standards of accentuation. Again, he is pre-eminently the product of the reign of Henry VII., and reflects its unambitious and essentially practical spirit. The king was not inappreciative of literature or scholarship, but there was nothing about him to excite his protégé to enthusiasm. Add to this the fact that Hawes was unduly respectful to the prestige of his predecessors, especially to Lydgate's, and we need not be surprised to find that his verse is decidedly dull. Yet in the spirit of his chief work he does faintly foreshadow the *Faerie Queene;* allegory with him is essentially of moral purpose; his romantic chivalry is made to serve virtue rather than minister to beauty. But he had nothing of Spenser's prolific invention, none of his instinct for beauty in colour or in movement. He was the scholarly moralist, casting his thoughts in a mould that was merely conventional.

Life.—Little is known of his life, which extended from about 1475 to about 1530. He served at the court both of Henry VII. and of his son, and seems to have been

appreciated for his dramatic powers, for his learned conversation, and for a wonderful memory which enabled him to recite long passages of poetry without pause or mistake. *The Pastime of Pleasure*, his most important work, was written in 1506, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517. It is more fully described as " the history of Grand Amour and La Belle Pucelle: containing the Knowledge of the Seven Sciences and the Course of Man's Life in the World." If the first part of this title promises something in the nature of romance, the second part suggests a more severe fare; and it is this second part which is most characteristic of Hawes and dominates his poem. He is not so long-winded as Lydgate, but he is more tedious. His handling of the seven-line stanza is heavy and uncertain; when he uses the heroic couplet he comes a little nearer to his masters, and in the character of False Report he is almost lively. But he had neither the art nor the inspiration to turn his intractable material into poetry. He was a man of the past, carrying the mediæval burdens of allegory and scholasticism, unaware of the renaissance of humanism which was at hand and might have lightened his load. Other works of his were *The Example of Virtue*, *The Conversion of Swearers*, and *A Joyful Meditation to all England of the Coronation of Henry VIII.*; and there were almost certainly some others which have been lost.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

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Studies.—Morley, H.: *English Writers*, Vol. IV. (Cassell, 1889).—Ker, W. P.: *Essays on Mediæval Literature* (Macmillan, 1905).—Snell, F. J.: *The Age of Transition*, 1400–1580 (2 vols., Bell, 1905).

Chapter 5. SCOTTISH POETS

Barbour—James I.—Henryson—Dunbar—Douglas—The Ballads

JOHN BARBOUR (*c.* 1326–96)

The first of the national poets of Scotland to give his country a worthy place in English literature was a man of humble origin who rose, comparatively early in his life, to the position of Archdeacon of Aberdeen. John Barbour was a learned man, well acquainted with Latin and French literature, and able to use the English short-lined rhyming couplet with fluency and strength. We hear of him going to Oxford in 1357, and to France in 1365 : on several subsequent occasions he visited both countries, partly on political missions, and partly with the interests of a scholar. In 1372 he obtained an important post at the king's exchequer, and for many years was an important personage in touch with the king, by whom he was liberally rewarded for his services.

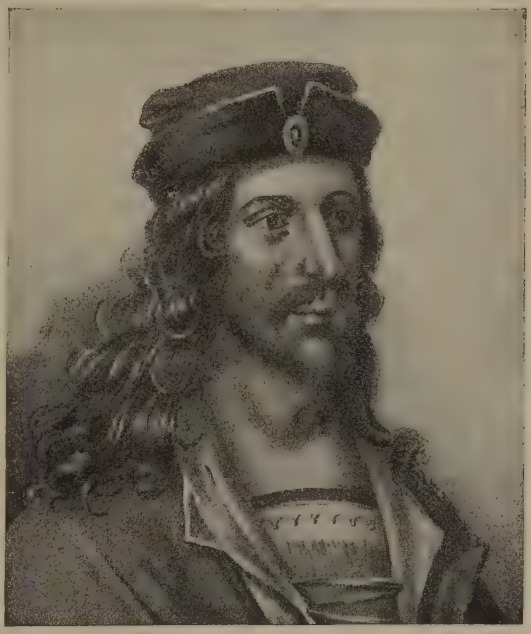
One work only is known to be certainly Barbour's, the patriotic epic romance of *Brus*, which was completed in 1378. But he has also been credited with other long poems, entirely on conjectural grounds. Among these are the *Buik of Alexander*, the longest poem of the Alexander saga in English, a translation from two French poems ; two fragments, in octosyllabic metre, on the *Siege of Troy ;* and a collection of *Lives of the Saints*. These doubtful poems would not add anything to the reputation of the author of the *Brus*, which will always keep Barbour's name in remembrance. In it we have a worthy foretaste of that combination of historical romance and epic narrative with which Scott has made us familiar. Indeed, Scott owns his inspiration for the *Lord of the Isles* to the old poet who treated in a kindred spirit the same patriotic theme.

The *Brus* has considerable value as history, seeing that it was the work of a competent scholar and careful student who, living at some distance from the localities where passionate memories remained, was able to be reasonably impartial as well as patriotic. But it contains also much matter drawn from the popular traditions and from the hero-worship of a nation ; it cannot, therefore, be read simply as history. Fortunately it need not be. It must be read for what it is—a spirited tale, in which the spirit of the national songs prevails ; a vivid narrative of moving adventures, without much of the artificial grace of authentic poetry ; a powerful story, roughly told, but with a strong human interest, in spite of the impossibilities occasionally ascribed to Bruce himself and to the loyal James Douglas. The accretion of legend to such personalities was inevitable ; it is Barbour's great merit that it has not spoiled the dignity, the force, and the sanity of his poem. How truly

human and sensible Barbour is can be appreciated when we compare the *Brus* with the violent and exaggerated patriotism of the *Wallace* composed about a century later by the minstrel known as Blind Harry.

JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND (1394–1436)

While on a voyage to France, whither he was bound for the purposes of education, the boy King of Scotland fell into the hands of the English, and from 1405 to 1424 was kept in honourable confinement in England. He was at Windsor when he fell in love with the Lady Joan Beaufort—the episode that inspired the one poem by which he is now known. It may be added that his love was prosperous; he was married, and returned to Scotland to be crowned at Scone in 1424. The task of ruling his turbulent realm was beyond him, and he was murdered in 1436; not, however, before he had rendered an important service to his country's literature. In England he had used his time well, and among other princely acquirements he had gained an intimate acquaintance with the works of Chaucer and had learned to imitate him gracefully.



James I. of Scotland.
(From Walpole's "Noble Authors.")

The *Kingis Quhair* (King's Book) is a pleasing poem in rhyme-royal (a stanza which is said to have obtained its name from the king's use of it); it tells in Chaucer's allegorical manner the story of the royal love; how he saw the vision of his lady in the castle court; how he was wounded by the pangs of love when she disappeared, and how he was consoled. It is often fantastic, and of course imitative and artificial in its setting; but it deserves to be read for its felicitous natural touches, and for its vein of deep and sincere feeling. Moreover, it is not of absurd length, and the situation is developed in an artistic manner. True, it lacks the dramatic realism of Chaucer's more mature work, but it is an excellent exercise in the poet's allegorical, amorous style. With it the king introduced Chaucer to his countrymen, two of whom were soon to improve upon his example.

ROBERT HENRYSON (*c.* 1425–1500)

The outer life of this poet is almost a complete blank: nothing certain is known about his birth, education, or death. One of his name was enrolled as a member of Glasgow University in 1462, and the same name appears as notary on certain deeds connected with Dunfermline in 1478. There is reason for believing that he was a schoolmaster in that town, and from a reference in Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris* he was certainly dead in 1508. These are all the facts about him; but his works, of which there are a considerable number, reveal him as a sedulous student of Chaucer, and also as a true poet of individual and original gifts. He had considerable power of realistic narrative, in which he surpassed Chaucer in some respects; in expression he could be concise and witty, with a sense of dry humour which is very agreeable. His attitude was that of the moralist who must see that his stories close with the triumph of justice and right; but he did not allow his moral purpose to overwhelm his dramatic gift, and his commentary is usually pointedly expressed and does not interfere with the interest of the tale itself.

No chronological sequence can be made for his works. *The Testament of Cresseid* and *Orpheus and Eurydice* are most closely dependent upon Chaucer; *Robyne and Makyne* and the *Fables* contain more of his own personal and peculiar qualities; while in a few minor poems that have been attributed to him he seems to escape from the Chaucerian influence altogether, and to take his place among the popular poets of Scotland.

In *The Testament of Cresseid* he set himself the ambitious task of completing Chaucer's *Troilus* and of bringing it to a conclusion that was more consonant with the claims of strict morality. He thought that Chaucer was too lenient with the faithless Cressida; consequently he makes her pay the penalty of her lightness in love. He reduces her to abject poverty and friendlessness. Stricken with leprosy, she is made to ask alms of Troilus as he returns from a triumphant exploit. He recognizes her and throws her a rich gift: it is not until he has passed by that she discovers the identity of her benefactor. The poem is written with a fine reserve and simplicity, and is by no means a mere anticlimax to the original.

In *Orpheus and Eurydice* Henryson treated a classical subject, in rhyme-royal stanzas, with rather less success; the story is well told, and is interrupted by a few quite competent lyrical passages; but the closing moral is rather long-drawn and dull, though it is unnecessary, as the moral is quite clearly implied in the story itself. *Robyne and Makyne* is more interesting, and deserves to be remembered as the first English pastoral. But the best outlet for his talent he found in the book of thirteen Fables which he entitled the *Morall Fabillis of Esope*. Though neither the matter nor the manner of the beast-fable was original, but derived from the vast body of such literature that was current in mediæval times, there is a freshness in Henryson's descriptions and a prevalent humour in the narratives that mark

them with a strong idiosyncrasy. They reflect the Chaucerian outlook on life, its gaiety and high spirits, its subtle and humorous observation, even more than the Chaucerian style, though the rhyme-royal is used in all of them. In his direct and faithful nature-pictures and in his realistic touches of character, he drew upon Chaucer, but gave his borrowing a Scottish atmosphere such as we are not to find again in equal clearness till the coming of Burns.

WILLIAM DUNBAR (*c.* 1460–*c.* 1525)

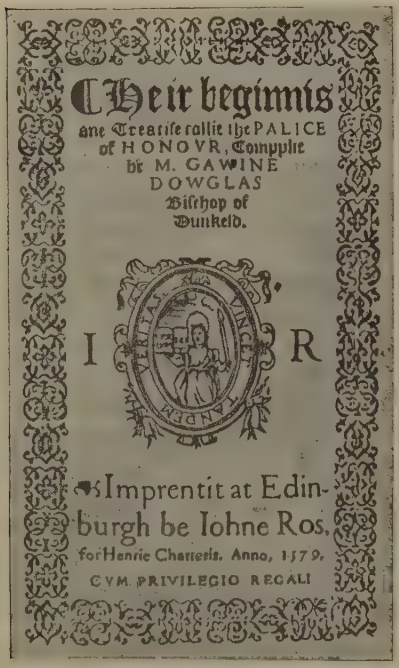
Though not perhaps equal, in any single composition, to Henryson at his best, William Dunbar was more clearly a man of genius than his predecessor. His life was one of considerable variety, and can be followed fairly clearly, in outline at least. He was of good family, and took his M.A. degree at St. Andrews in 1479. For some time he wandered through England into France as a Franciscan novice, and some of his experiences were such as gave him an intimate acquaintance with the least reputable side of life. He became attached to the court of James IV., and hoped long and vainly for a Church living. Unsuccessful in this, he enjoyed a good pension for his services to the king; among which services was his journey to London on a mission matrimonial, which led to the bringing back of the young Princess Margaret as the king's bride. Dunbar seems to have been one of the ornaments of King James's gay court, and doubtless contributed to the monarch's intellectual entertainment. After Flodden (1513) we hear no more of Dunbar; possibly he perished there, though there is a little (very flimsy) evidence that he lived a few years longer.

Like Henryson, Dunbar owed much to Chaucer, but the strain of independence was stronger in him, especially on the satirical side. He wrote two allegorical poems, in which the influence of Chaucer is seen at its strongest; but even in these, conventional as their method is, there is more than a glimpse of that hard clearness and epigrammatic terseness of style which made Dunbar something more than a "Scottish Chaucer." *The Thrissil and the Rois* (1503) is a very graceful epithalamium on the royal wedding, not excessively long—indeed, brief by comparison with similar allegorical effusions; pleasantly conceived in neat compliment to the royal pair, and executed with terse and glowing descriptions in eloquent and impressive language. In richness of fancy, in exuberance of inventive delight, in variety of type, it is not the equal of the *Parliament of Fowls*, but it moves gracefully and honourably in the same society. *The Goldyn Targe* (1508), setting forth "the armour of reason against importunate desire," is, as this description implies, an allegory of love. It is a very favourable specimen of the conventional courtly poem, brilliant and abundant in descriptive power, and full of "aureate terms" which help to give weight and splendour to his simple allegory. It suffers from excess of ornament: Dunbar's style was concise, but yet florid; and if he escapes tediousness it is by a very luxury of illustrative pictorial passages.

Of his personal poems we may mention *How Dunbar was desired to be ane Friar*

and the *Lament for the Makaris*. The former is a brief but crushing satire on the friars, based upon his personal experiences. The second is an exquisite little poem written when he was dangerously sick, in 1508, and lamenting the loss of so many good "makers" (poets). Among these was one Walter Kennedy, about whom Dunbar had written a violent and bitter satire in the *Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy*.

It is, however, in his satirical poems that Dunbar rises into the realms of genius. Here he shows a masterly ingenuity of phrase, a boisterous humour, a power over the grotesque, that is all his own. We might almost describe it as a peculiarly Scottish trait, when we recall its reappearance in Burns. Among the poems of this kind are *Tidings from the Session*, the *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*, and especially the *Dance of the Sevin Deidlie Synnis*, which must be regarded as his masterpiece. It is an allegory in hell, a veritable dance of death, weird, grotesque, satirical, witty, and fantastically realistic. In it we see how Dunbar, lacking the grace and delicacy of Chaucer's humour, had a shrewd strength and rude primeval force that came, not from education, but from nature herself.



A Gawain Douglas title-page.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS (? 1475–1522)

The contemporary apparition of Douglas was more imposing in most respects than that of Dunbar, but he cannot fill so high a place in literary history. One of the sons of the Earl of Angus, Gawain Douglas was born in the purple; well educated, he entered the Church, and soon became provost of St. Giles's, Edinburgh (1501). As a result of Queen Margaret's second marriage, he became involved in political troubles; intrigue gave him the bishopric of Dunkeld in 1515; but his political course was unfortunate, his name was against him, and he died, an exile in England, in 1522.

Dunbar's language is hard, but Douglas's is harder. It is flamboyantly and deliberately Scottish; but that is not all. He did not scruple to burden his diction with French words not yet incorporated in the general speech, and with coinages from Latin *ad hoc*. He was a man of serious mind, scholarly and patriotic, but inclined to be pompous and turgid. He wrote two allegories: *The Palice of Honour* (1501) and *King Hart*. The first of these owes its inspiration obviously to Chaucer, especially to the *Hous of Fame;* it is, however, a tedious production, dedicated to

the exaltation of virtue, but bearing about it all the signs of a decadent method. *King Hart* is, perhaps, a better poem; its theme is the courtship of Heart, *i.e.* human nature, by Dame Pleasaunce, his temporary defeat and his repentance.

The work which keeps the name of Gawain Douglas fresh is his translation of Virgil's *Æneid*, which was completed in 1513. He not only translated the whole of the twelve books, but a thirteenth additional one, and to each book he wrote a prologue in addition. The work was clearly the outcome of a true admiration and respect for Virgil, and this is of itself a virtue in Douglas. It is not, of course, satisfying to the requirements of a modern scholar, nor is the verse distinguished by any noteworthy qualities of finish or grace. The medium is indeed a rude one, and achieves its best results in the prologues, especially in descriptions of the wilder aspects of nature inspired by Scottish scenery. But the work is humanistic in spirit, without having been prompted by the coming spirit of the Renaissance. It foreshadows, however faintly, the enthusiasm for learning and literature that was imminent; and for this it must be held in honourable memory.

THE BALLADS

In this section may be included the ballad literature of Scotland and England—a literature which is found in all districts of our island, but of which the greatest examples seem to be confined to the borderland of the two kingdoms. Of no branch of literary art is the peculiar quality more easily recognized, and in none are the sources and ancestry more obscure. Four main theories have been promulgated. There is, first, the "communal" school, who maintain that the ballad was born at some primeval date out of tribal song and dance, as free from specific human parentage as Melchizedek. The second school, which may be called the "popular," do not deny an original unknown author, but maintain that the ballads deal chiefly with legends common to all early peoples, and were not the product of a literary class, but were elaborated and transmitted by ordinary folk. The third school definitely attributes the authorship to a minstrel class, but minstrels living before the days of the chivalric romance, folk-singers who flourished in times antecedent to recorded history. The fourth school holds that the ballads in their existing form belong to a comparatively late age, and were the work of popular minstrels, who were the successors of the old skalds and gleemen, and worked on a literary tradition which represented the breakdown of the elder tradition of the romance or fabliau, when they were not composing lays like the *chansons de geste*, called forth by a contemporary event.

On a survey of the surviving ballads and such historic facts as are known about them, it would appear that the view of the fourth school is the most reasonable. Art—and the ballads are often great art—does not come into being from popular excitement, but from the inspiration of a particular gifted individual: it cannot be syndicated and socialized. The doctrine of the extreme antiquity of the original

minstrel seems to be contradicted by the facts before us. Besides the bards maintained by the feudal lords, there was also a tradition of a rude popular minstrelsy, which contained elements reaching back to beliefs far older than Christianity. As the romantic tradition of the fabliaux died away, its remnants took popular shape in country tales, and out of this material the ballads were made by men whose identity has not been preserved. The probability is that most of the ballads were fashioned in the 16th century by minstrels who summed up a long ancestry of popular poetry, as in Burns culminated a long tradition of Scottish vernacular song.

Ballad literature falls roughly into three classes. There is the historical ballad, such as *Otterburn*, *The Bonny Earl o' Moray*, *The Outlaw Murray*, and the Robin Hood cycle. There is the romantic ballad, such as the *Douglas Tragedy* and *The Gay Goss Hawk*; and there is the ballad of the half-world, of faëry and the things seen between light and darkness, such as *Tamlane*, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, and the *Lyke-wake Dirge*. English and Scottish ballad literature has been collected in almost all its variants by the late Professor F. J. Child of Harvard, in five volumes —*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston, 1882–98). (See also p. 640.)

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—JAMES I.: *The Kingis Quair*, ed. W. W. Skeat (Scottish Text Society, 1884).—DUNBAR, W.: *Poems*, ed. H. B. Baildon (Cambridge University Press, 1907).—BARBOUR, J.: *The Bruce*, ed. W. M. Mackenzie (Black, 1909).—HENRYSON, ROBERT: *Poems*, ed. by G. Gregory Smith (3 vols., 1906–14).—DOUGLAS, GAVIN: *Poetical Works*, ed. J. Small (Edinburgh, 4 vols., 1874).

Studies.—HENDERSON, T. F.: *Scottish Vernacular Literature* (1898).—MILLAR, J. H.: *A Literary History of Scotland* (Unwin, 1903).—SMITH, G. GREGORY: *The Transition Period* (Blackwood, 1900).

Chapter 6. PROSE-WRITERS

Fifteenth-century Prose—Mandeville, Pecock, Fortescue, *Paston Letters*—Invention of Printing—Caxton's Translations, etc.—Malory

One of the events that help to define the boundaries between mediæval and modern times is the invention of printing. Its effect on literary production was immense. When readers were more easily supplied with books, writers were no longer obliged to conform to the fettering requirements of the professional reciter. Though ballads and popular stories continued to be produced for illiterate audiences, these have tended ever since to form an inferior class, only in the case of a writer of genius like Defoe or Bunyan having affinities with literature. The higher classes of literary work were deeply affected by the circumstance that they were to be read at leisure by educated people.

One result was that more books were written in prose. Most prose works hitherto written in England were either in Latin or in French, or else merely translations. Most Anglo-Saxon prose had consisted of homilies or works intended for popular instruction. But in the 15th century the spread of education is evidenced by the existence of a mass of clear and racy prose such as the *Paston Letters*, and the printing press encouraged writers to publish miscellaneous books in this medium.

PROSE BEFORE CAXTON

"Sir John Mandeville."—Jean d'Outremeuse, a writer living at Liége, states in his *Myreur des Histors* that he received the story known to us as "The Travels of Sir John Mandeville" in 1472 from the lips of a dying man, Jean à la Barbe, who alleged that his real name was Sir John Mandeville. Whether Jean à la Barbe was an invention of Jean d'Outremeuse or the inventor of the travels, it is certain that the book is a most amusing perversion of all that was known, believed, or fancied at that time about the Eastern world, the pretended object being to furnish pilgrims with a guide to Jerusalem. It was translated into most European languages, and there were three English versions, two of which are remarkable for their racy and spirited style, and are usually drawn upon for modern editions. The princess transformed into a serpent appears thus:

> And some men say that in the isle of Lango is yet the daughter of Ypocras, in form and likeness of a great dragon, that is a 100 fathom of length, as men say, for I have not seen her. And they of the Isles call her lady of the land. And she lieth in an old castle, in a cave, and sheweth twice or thrice in the year, and she doth no harm to no man, but if men do her harm. And she was thus changed and transformed from a fair damosel into likeness of a dragon by a goddess that was clept Diana. And men say that she shall so endure in that form of a dragon unto the time that a knight come that is so hardy that dare come to her and kiss her on the mouth.

Learned Writers.—Theologians, philosophers, and lawyers preferred Latin to English still; yet they sometimes wrote pamphlets or even more extended works in English.

(1) Reginald Pecock (*c.* 1395–1460), Bishop of St. Asaph and afterwards of Chichester, was an active opponent of the Lollards, and wrote his famous *Repressor of Overmuch Weeting* (*Blaming*) *of the Clergy* (1455) as a systematic defence of the Church and hierarchy against Wyclifite criticisms. Unfortunately, his bold reasoning and intellectual superiority excited the hostility of the clergy whom he was essaying to defend, and he was condemned to recantation. His style is admirable for its clearness and vigour.

(2) Sir John Fortescue, lord chief justice under Henry VI., besides many Latin works, wrote *Monarchia, or The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, in English (*c.* 1471). Fortescue also wrote a dialogue retracting his defence of the Lancastrian house, when the Yorkists came in, and a reflective dialogue between Understanding and Faith.

William Caxton.

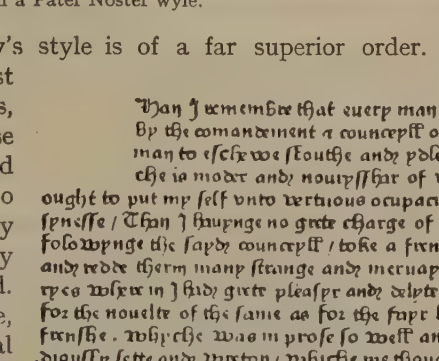
(3) John de Trevisa (*c.* 1322–1402), a Cornishman by birth, was at Exeter College, Oxford (1362–5), and fellow of Queen's (1369), and from 1362 he held the vicarage of Berkeley, where he is buried. His translation of the Benedictine Ranulf Higden's (*c.* 1299–1363) historical and general compendium, the *Polychronicon* (*c.* 1364), was the first historical work in English prose since the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and was immensely popular. It was finished in 1387, printed in 1482 by Caxton, and long remained a standard book.

The Paston Letters. — From the point of view of the literary and social history of the people, the *Paston Letters* are more important than a good many works of professed literature. They consist of a number of letters, accounts, and other family documents giving a detailed picture of a Norfolk family of gentlefolk through three generations. The main plot is the story of how the family clung to the Fastolf estates in spite of legal and illegal attempts to dispossess them. Apart from these dramatic events, the letters are an intimate portrayal of manners, and also of character, and give us vividly the daily life, the business concerns, the domestic routine, the daily relations with outsiders of every description, and, not least, the recreations of such a family. The general style is surprisingly straightforward and vivid. Thus a servant writes to a lord:

> And gyf hyt plees your Hygnes, as towchyng the soden aventuer that fell latly at Coventre, plees hyt your Lordshyp to her that, on Corpus Christi Even last passed, be twene viij and ix of the clok at afternon, Syr Umfrey Stafford had browth my mayster Syr James of Urmond toward hys yn from my Lady of Shrewsbery, and reterned from hym toward hys yn, he met

with Syr Robert Harcourt comyng from hys moder towards hys yn, and passed Syr Umfrey, and Richard, hys son, came somewhat be hynd, and when they met to gyder they fell in handes togyder, and Syr Robert smot hym a grette stroke on the hed with hys sord, and Richard with hys dagger hastely went toward hym. And as he stombled, on of Harcourts men smot hym in the bak with a knyfe; men wotte not ho hyt was reddely. Hys fader hard noys, and rode toward hem, and hys men ronne befor hym thyder ward; and in the goynge downe of hys hors, on, he wotte not ho, be hynd hym smot hym on the hede with a nege tole, men know not with us with what wepone, that he fell downe; and hys son fell downe be fore hym as good as dede. And all thys was don, as men sey, in a Pater Noster wyle.

Malory's "Morte Darthur."—Malory's style is of a far superior order. He had a subject worthy of the highest literary art, and he had the genius, and in the poems and the prose romances from which he paraphrased he had not inadequate models, to fashion a kind of prose exquisitely adapted to his theme. The simplicity of his style is deliberately cultivated. He chose consciously the concrete, sensuous words that were the natural language of the poets from whom much of his material was immediately drawn; and he preferred racy, vernacular idioms and the expressive cadences of the spoken language to the involved phraseology of the learned style. Malory's is a poetical vocabulary though he wrote in prose. His style was highly flexible, fitted alike for plain narrative and for lofty imaginative passages. The impressive chapter telling of Lancelot's despairing attempt to see the mysteries of the Grail owes much to its original, one of the noblest passages in the French prose romances. When they come near the hallowed spot, Galahad takes leave of his father.



Than I remembre that euery man is bounden by the comandement & councepll of the wyse man to eschewe slouthe and ydlenes wherfore I am moder and nourysshar of vyces and ought to put my self vnto vertuous occupacion and besynesse / Than I thynge no grete charge of occupacion folowynge the sayd councepll / toke a frenche booke and redde therin many straunge and merueyllous hystoryes wherin I fynde grete plesyr and delyte / as well for the nouelte of the same as for the fayr langage of frenshe. Whyche was in prose so well and compendiously sette and wryton / whiche me thought I vnderstood by the sentence and substance of euery mater / And for so moche as this booke was newe and late maade and drawen out of frenshe / and neuer had seen hit in oure englysshe tonge / I thought in my self hit shold be a good besynes to translate hyt in to oure englysshe / to thende that hyt myght be had as well in the royame of England as other landes / and also for to passe therwyth the tyme. and thus concludyng in my self to begynne this sayd werke / And forthwith toke penne and ynke and began boldly to renne forth as blynde bayard in thys present werke whyche is named the recuyell of the troian hystoryes And afterwardy whan I remembryd my self of my symplenes and vnperfightnes that I had in bothe langages / that is to wete in frenshe & in englysshe for in france was I neuer / and was born & lerned my in englysshe in kente in the weelde where I doubte not is spoken as brode and rude englysshe as is in ony place of england & hath contynued by the space of .cc. yere for the most parte in the contres of Brabande. flandres holande

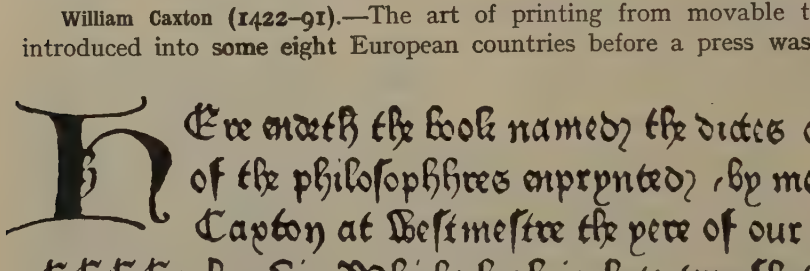
A page from Caxton's First Book printed in Bruges, "The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy."
(British Museum.)

Thenne he wente to his fader and kyst hym swetely and sayd / Fair swete fader I wote not whan I shal see you more tyl I see the body of Ihesu Cryst / I praye you sayd Launcelot praye ye to the hyghe fader that he hold me in his seruyse and soo he took his hors / and ther they herd a voyce that sayd thynke for to doo wel / for the one shal neuer see the other before the dredeful day of dome / Now sone Galahad said Launcelot syn we shal departe and neuer see other / I pray to the hygh fader to conserue me and yow bothe / Sire said Galahad noo prayer auaylleth

soo moche as yours / And there with Galahad entryd in to the foreste / And the wynde aroos and drofe Launcelot more than a moneth thurgh oute the see where he slepte but lytyl but prayed to god that he myght see some tydynges of the Sancgreal / Soo hyt befelle on a nyghte at mydnyghte he aryued afore a Castel on the bak syde whiche was ryche and fayre / and there was a posterne opened toward the see / and was open withoute ony kepynge / sauf two lyons kept the entre / and the moone shone clere /

Malory completed his redaction of the *Morte Darthur* from numerous originals about 1470; it was published by Caxton in 1485.

William Caxton (1422–91).—The art of printing from movable types had been introduced into some eight European countries before a press was established in


Here endeth the book named the dictes or sayengis of the philosophhres enprynted / by me William Caxton at Westmestre the yere of our lord ·M· CCCC· Lxxxv· Whiche book is late translated out of frenssh into englysshe / by the Noble and puissant lord Lord Antone Erle of Ryuyers lord of Scales & of the Ile of Wyght / Defendour and directour of the siege apostolique / for our holy Fadre the Pope in this Royame of Englond and Gouernour of my lord Prynce of Wales

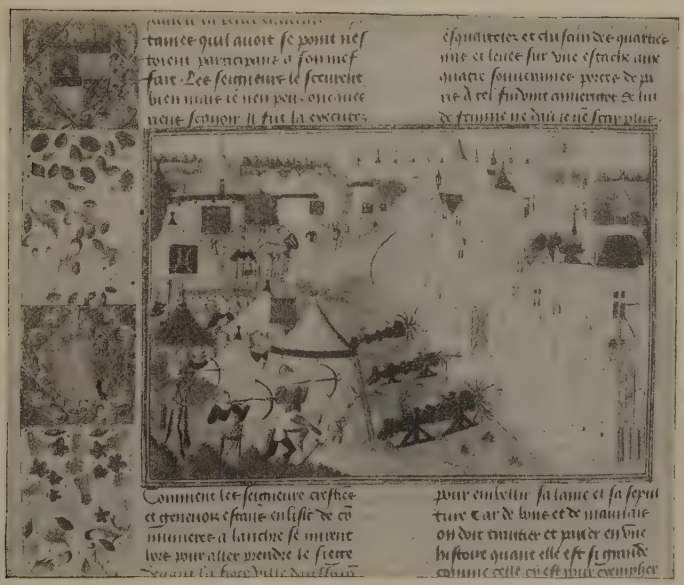
Extract from Caxton's First Book printed in England, "The Dictes and Sayeings of the Philosophers."

England. Caxton learned printing during a long stay on the Continent, and before coming home to set up a press at Westminster published at Cologne (*c.* 1474) the first book printed in English, his *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, which he had himself translated from a great French redaction of the Troy romances. The first book actually printed and dated in England, *The Dictes and Sayeings of the Philosophers*, was issued at the Westminster press in 1477. He revised and extended *The Chronicles of England* from Brute, two editions of which came out in 1480 and 1482, and printed Higden's *Polychronicon*. Caxton's own renderings of *The Mirror of the World*, *Reynard the Fox*, and *Godfrey of Boulogne* appeared in 1481. He had printed single works of Lydgate and Chaucer, and an edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. An edition of the latter was published in 1483, and Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* and Gower's *Confessio Amantis* the same year. Next year appeared the great edition

The Golden Legend, translated by Caxton from a French and Latin version with the help of an English one. Æsop's *Fables* and *The Book of the Knight of the Tower* came out in 1484, and in 1485, besides the *Morte Darthur*, he printed *The Life of Charles the Grete* and *Paris and Vienne*, both from the French. Later issues from Caxton's press included Lord Berners's fine rendering of *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *The History of Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, and the *Eneydos*, a romance founded on the *Æneid*.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—*Specimens of English Literature*, 1394–1579, ed. W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press, 1894); *Marvellous Adventures of Sir John Maundeville*, ed. A. Layard (Constable, 1895); *Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner, 4 vols. (Constable, 1901); *Selections from the Paston Letters*, ed. A. D. Greenwood (Bell, 1920).



Page of Froissart's Chronicle.
(British Museum.)

Chapter 7. ORIGINS OF ENGLISH DRAMA

THE MIRACLE, MYSTERY, AND MORALITY PLAYS

Like the great drama of the Greeks, the English drama owed its origin to the demands of religious ritual. It began in a simple attempt to render clear and actual the central doctrine of the Church, the Resurrection of Christ. These Easter plays were performed in the church itself by clerics only, and their purpose was purely didactic. Gradually they were extended to other parts of the Liturgy, to scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and to the lives of saints; and as they became more elaborate and more dramatic the representations were moved from the interior of the church to the porch, and then to the churchyard; but their popularity caused a further removal to village greens, the streets, and other public places. This of course tended to give a more secular character to the performances, and the regular clergy began to view them with a suspicious disfavour when friars and laymen took part. But the revival of the festival of Corpus Christi in 1311 gave an impetus which was too strong to be resisted, and provided a public holiday which was dedicated to a complete representation in dramatic pageantry of Biblical history, from the creation to the resurrection. The impulse was strengthened by the growing importance of fairs, by the increase in wealth of the trading classes, and especially by the prosperous development of the trade guilds. Under these influences the miracle plays towards the year 1400 had become a regular annual feature of English life, retaining their religious basis, but developing dramatically at the same time.

The miracle play proper, dealing with the lives of the saints, has been traced back to the early years of the 12th century, when, as Matthew Paris records, a play of St. Katherine was performed at Dunstable (*c.* 1119). This miracle play was probably the work of the Abbot Geoffrey of St. Albans; like all its kind, it was doubtless in Latin, but it has not survived. A little later a Norman clerk named Hilarius composed several miracles, of which plays on *St. Nicholas* and the *Raising of Lazarus* are extant; the oldest English fragment is the *Harrowing of Hell*, and seems to date from the end of the 13th century.

The mystery plays, which deal entirely with the Scripture history, were developed more particularly in England from the Easter and Christmas plays, and were especially associated with the Corpus Christi festival. They were performed in a cycle of pageants, each individual pageant representing a single episode, such as the murder of Abel, the Flood, the sacrifice of Isaac, the appearance to the Shepherds, or the Massacre of the Innocents. The municipality took the responsibility for the whole performance, and each scene was assigned to a separate guild. They were carried

out with especial thoroughness at various towns in the North, notably York, Wakefield, and Chester, and at Norwich and Coventry. The stage, or pageant, was a crude contrivance in two stories: the lower represented hell and was used as a kind of retiring-room for the players, and the upper floor often had a canopy to signify heaven. The plays themselves are of multifarious value. Their literary merit is slight. Sometimes the dialogue is vivacious and witty, but the verse is crude and limping, and gives us no foretaste of the dramatic use of the heroic line even in such inferior hands as those of Greene and Peele. In treatment they were hampered by the imperative claims of their subject. There could be no freedom in the plot, no development of personal points of view, when the least suspicion of heresy might be fatal; but there is often a lively sense of character, sometimes a display of crude humour. The jostling of a lofty idealism with a realism that tends frequently to coarseness is stranger to modern minds than the mixture of tragedy and comedy in *King Lear*, but it is the product of the same native dramatic unconventionality. Noah's wife, Herod, and the Devil are the favourite humorous types, and it is in such figures, with their racy dialogue, that the mysteries show their affinity with the later English drama.

A Chester Mystery Play.
(From Chambers's "Book of Days.")

Several complete cycles of mysteries have been preserved. The York cycle consists of forty-eight plays, which may probably be ascribed in their present form to the century 1350–1450. The Towneley Mysteries, consisting of thirty plays, were performed at Wakefield, and should perhaps be dated a little later: they treat their themes in a freer, less refined and less religious spirit, but are for that reason more dramatic; there is more of the incongruous horse-play and less of the didactic purpose; the human interest is considerably heightened. The Chester group of twenty-four plays is more uneven; and those of Coventry, forty-two in number, return to the serious vein and even lean towards a moralizing allegorical tone. Nothing is known of the authors of any of the plays. They are possibly the climax of a tradition, the plays we have being the final versions of a composite development extending

over 150 or 200 years. In their heyday they were extraordinarily popular with all classes: we have record of Richard II. attending the York festival in 1397, while Henry V. patronized the performance at Coventry in 1416.

In the group of four plays known as the Digby Mysteries (*c.* 1500), an unmistakable advance in the direction of true drama is made, especially in the play of *Mary Magdalene;* but this realistic line of growth was delayed by the vogue of the morality play, which was a natural development from the older type of mystery. The morality retained the rude versification of the mystery, making use of alliteration as well as rhyme and of frequent stanza arrangements. It was equally serious in intention, and at bottom dealt with the same big problem of good and evil. But the authors of the moralities took advantage of the fashionable allegory; their characters were abstractions, who played their parts like the shadowy figures of the *Roman de la Rose.* On the whole they were an advance on the mystery play. Their theme made a definite plot necessary, and thus a great advance was taken in the art of dramatic construction. The earliest mention of such an allegorical play is that of the lost *Play of the Paternoster* in the reign of Edward III.; the oldest extant is *The Castle of Perseverance,* a long, dull, but dignified discussion which traces the adventures of Humanum Genus and his encounters with Mundus, Caro, and Belial. Even more abstract are such plays as *Mind, Wit and Understanding, The Four Elements* (*c.* 1517), and *Wit and Science.* The interest in these is purely theological and philosophical; but there is a livelier and more human note in short pieces like *Lusty Juventus* and *Hickescorner;* the latter indeed has flashes of humour and pictures vividly the peccadilloes of its hero, who is almost a person. But the best of the older moralities is the impressive play of *Everyman* (*c.* 1500), in which the powerful allegory is reinforced by considerable knowledge of human nature and by significant and well-handled dialogue.

Under Henry VIII., who was a patron of the drama, the morality grew into the interlude, a short dramatic representation filling the intervals of the prolonged spectacular pageants that he loved. Under him the interlude lost its didactic purpose; in the interludes of John Heywood (*c.* 1500–80), like *The Foure PP,* we have an essentially English product, with witty dialogue, humorous characterization, and plenty of farcical incidents. Nevertheless, the spirit of the morality survived in more august drama. The "humours" of Ben Jonson have a similar purpose to the allegorical devices of *Hickescorner* and *Everyman;* and a play like *The Staple of News* is a satirical morality, with such characters as Pecunia, Mortgage, and Rose Wax as the centre of its plot.

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Texts.—GAYLEY, C. M.: *Representative English Comedies,* Vol. I. *From the Beginnings to Shakespeare* (Macmillan, New York, 1912).—*Everyman, with other Interludes, including eight Miracle Plays,* introduction by E. Rhys (Everyman, Dent).—MANLY, J. M.: *Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama* (2 vols. Ginn, 1897).

Chapter 8. THE LANGUAGE—LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH AND TRANSITION PERIOD (1350–1500)

The period 1350–1500 was marked by the final triumph of the vernacular, and the development of a standard usage in English. After 1370 a growing tendency to prefer the usage of London to that of other dialects may be traced in literature, while the use of French rapidly declines. The period ends with the standardizing of the written language and spelling resultant upon the setting up of Caxton's press at Westminster in 1476, but by no means generally current.

Earl Rivers presenting his Book to Edward IV.
(From "The Dictes and Sayeings of the Philosophers," printed by Caxton in 1477.)

Growing Importance of the Vernacular.—From 1350 on, English began to replace French and Latin as the *official language* of the country. The Proclamation of Henry III. in 1258, issued in English, French, and Latin, was a foreshadowing of what was to come. In 1362 Edward III. opened Parliament with an English speech, and decreed that the arguments and judgments in the law courts should be in English. The first English Petition to Parliament dates from 1386, the first Private Records date from 1375, the earliest English Wills from 1387, and the first statutes of Guilds from 1389, and in the course of the 15th century English came generally into use for public and private documents of all kinds. As regards the *schools*, John of Trevisa was able to say in 1385 that "in alle þe gramere scoles of Engeland children leveþ Frensche and construeþ and lerneþ an Englische." After 1350 the *literary* practice of writing in Latin and French also decreased. Gower turned from these to English, and Chaucer's English set the fashion for 15th-century poets, while Wyclif's Bible (1381 and 1388) and his use of English for learned prose works influenced the 15th-century prose-writers both in their choice of a medium and in their usage of it.

Standard English.—The London dialect began to take rank as a standard towards the end of the 14th century. The causes contributing to this were: (i) the predominating importance of London as the capital, the seat of the court and government, and centre of trade and commerce, which made London English the natural language of affairs; (ii) the position of London, which made the dialect a natural medium of communication between north and south; originally Southern (as seen in William I.'s charter to the city in 1066), it had already begun to adopt Midland characteristics in 1258 (*cf.* Proclamation of Henry III.), and by 1400 was more nearly approximated to Midland; (iii) the literary influence of Chaucer, and that of Gower and Wyclif, whose usage approximated to that of London.[1] The language of Chaucer's poetry is more conservative than the spoken or the official London English of his day, but may owe its more southerly features, in part, to the usage of the Court.

Characteristics of Late Middle English.—(i) *Spelling.* Fifteenth-century spelling, as normalized by Caxton, formed the basis of modern spelling, and exhibits various modern features. Thus final *-e*, which had become silent in the north by about 1350, and in the south before 1450, was already beginning to mark vowel length, except after *v* or *c*, as in *life, rope*, beside *live, once*. Similarly, double consonants, which no longer signified consonant length, began to be used to mark vowel shortness. Other anticipations of modern spelling are seen in the occasional employment by Caxton of *ea, ie* to distinguish open and close *e*, as in *great, friend, chief*. It is unfortunate that Caxton adhered to the conservative spelling of his age, and did not attempt to represent the new changes in *pronunciation* which characterize the 15th century[2] such as that of older *ē* to *ī*, or *ō* to *ū*, found already in Middle English, or *deed, moon* (Mod. Eng.). *Learned spellings* occur in Gower, who adopted some of the new etymological spellings affected by French writers of the 14th century, such as *debte, doubte, conceipt, deceipt*, for Middle English *dette, doute, conceite*, etc. Such spellings were common in the 15th and 16th centuries, and Caxton has *debt* and *doubt*. (ii) *Inflection.* The inflections of nouns and adjectives were reduced to the modern stage through the unaccented *-e* becoming mute. The four principal stem-forms of strong verbs were regularly reduced to three or two in the 15th century, and many strong verbs changed their class or became weak. (iii) In *syntax* modern periphrastic constructions became more prevalent, and the more lucid style and logical word-order suggest the influence of French. (iv) The *vocabulary*, as before, shows a number of French borrowings, mainly in the Continental form from 1400 on. (v) *Lowland Scots* was a distinct literary language in the 15th and 16th centuries,

[1] Gower, though a native of Kent, deviates little from the contemporary London usage. Wyclif's writings show his northern origin, but represent in the main the Oxford usage, perhaps modified by that of London. *Cf.* Wyld, *Hist. of Modern English*, pp. 56 *ff.*, for a detailed investigation of both writers.

[2] The less educated spellings of the 15th century show that most of the important vowel changes which affected the standard pronunciation of the next two centuries were in existence before 1450 as features of class or regional dialect, though not always in their final form. *Cf.* the recent researches of Zachrisson and Wyld.

the first example of it being Barbour's *Brus* (1375). Scottish literature of the 15th century is especially characterized by the use of *aureate terms* of Latin or French origin, which anticipated and passed into the inkhorn terms of the 16th century.

Aureate terms were used by both English and Scottish Chaucerians, but particularly the latter in attempted imitation of Chaucer's "swete rethorique," their purpose being to "illuminate" the vernacular with "fresch anamalit termes celicall" such as *degout, defundand, cebsitude, dulcorate, facundious, pulchritude, sugratifen*, etc. Thus Dunbar praises the "aureate tongis" of Homer and Cicero, and also of Gower and Lydgate, who have "illumynate and faire our-gilt our speche" with "goldyn pennis" (*Goldyn Targe*, 253–278).

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

ATKINS, J. W. H.: *The Language from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. III., ch. XX., 1909).—DIBELIUS, W.: *John Capgrave und die englische Schriftsprache* (Berlin, 1899).—DÖLLE, H.: *Zur Sprache Londons vor Chaucer* (Halle, 1913).—MORSBACH, L.: *Ueber den Ursprung der neuenglischen Schriftsprache* (Heilbronn, 1888); *Mittelenglische Grammatik* (1896).—RÖMSTEDT, H.: *Die englische Schriftsprache bei Caxton* (Göttingen, 1881).—WYLD: *History of Modern Colloquial English*.—ZACHRISSON: *Pronunciation of English Vowels, 1400–1700* (Göteborg, 1913). (See reading lists under previous sections.)

SECTION II
THE FULL TIDE OF THE RENAISSANCE

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

Mediæval England came to an inglorious end in the Wars of the Roses, which, depriving the country of peace, security, and a settled court life, were largely responsible for the dearth of literature in the 15th century. Modern England received its baptism of fire in the Puritan revolution. Between these two cataclysms lies England of the golden age, the age of heroes and Titans, of More and Tyndale, of Drake and Raleigh, of Bacon and Shakespeare. The national spirit which had burst for a moment into flame under Edward III. and then died down, now shone with a strong and steady light, kindling as always the fire of literary genius — this time unsurpassed by anything in the history of the world.

Tract of Good Living and Dying (1503).
(*British Museum.*)

But it was a soft south wind which bade the spices flow from out the Tudor garden. The return of peace, after a long period of strife, and the rise of a strong central government, circled by a brilliant court, prepared the soil; the renewal of contact with Italy, still as in the days of Chaucer the home of Renaissance culture, brought back the spring once more. Chaucer's great contemporaries, indeed, had been succeeded by less inspired and more artificial writers. The star of Petrarch was still in the ascendant, but Petrarchism had become a mannerism in his Italian and French followers. Yet their very preciosity made them attractive models for English court poets; their two chief instruments, the sonnet and the pastoral, being perfectly adapted to refined passion or delicate flattery; and if Boccaccio begat Chaucer, Ariosto begat Spenser. Moreover, in some directions the Renais-

sance swept along with stronger tide than ever. The re-discovery of the classics, which first set the movement on its way, had since then profoundly influenced the educational system of Europe, and the "New Learning," or Humanism, as it was called to distinguish it from the old scholasticism, reached its heyday at the time of Henry VIII., its supreme exponent, Erasmus, being the admiring friend of the English humanists, More, Colet, and Fisher. Humanism affected the vernacular literatures chiefly in the domain of prose. The models it studied were from the silver age of Latin literature, and it therefore led to affectation; the euphuism of Lyly and his predecessors was but one example of a craze that affected every language in Europe. Yet its net results were good; it brought order and precision into chaos; and the prose of modern literature learnt to pace before it began to walk.

Cheapside Cross in the year 1547.

Humanism, again, played an important part in the development of English drama. It is not without significance that John Heywood, writer of interludes, was related by marriage to Sir Thomas More. Moreover, the classical revival on the Continent gave birth to a neo-Latin drama, mostly written for schools and universities, of which "the Christian Terence," *i.e.* Terentian comedies on the Prodigal Son theme, was a notable example. Early in the 16th century this fashion reached our shores, and it gave birth to a flourishing Latin university drama, which in turn exercised a marked influence upon the native drama, more especially in the work of the "university wits" who were Shakespeare's immediate predecessors and teachers.

But Humanism was itself the parent of another movement, which was to run counter to much of the Renaissance spirit. Almost entirely responsible for the literature of Tudor England, the influence of the Renaissance was largely confined to the court and the universities. It was the Reformation which left the deeper mark upon the national character. The two movements at first went hand in hand, and seemed to find a common embodiment in the person of Henry VIII., while an early reformer like Bale was even prepared to use the drama for propaganda

purposes. But Protestantism developed. It became Puritanism, the religion of the middle classes, who, freed by the Tudors from the tyranny and insecurity of the feudal system, grew rapidly in wealth and power. The austerity of Puritanism, its intense preoccupation with the spiritual needs of the individual, the ideal of economy which, as the gospel of the trading classes, it set before its eyes, all tended to make it the bitter foe of that delight in life and love of extravagance which breathe from the literature and art of the Renaissance. More particularly against the players, "the caterpillars of the commonwealth," was its scorn directed, while the drama met with wholesale condemnation as a "sprig of that cursed root, popery." In this the Puritans were historically correct. The native drama, for all its debt to the Renaissance, was the direct descendant of the religious festival plays of the Middle Ages; and behind the passion of Lear lie centuries of dramatic representation of the supreme Sacrifice of the Christian faith.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

HERFORD, C. H.: *Literary Relations of England and Germany in the 16th Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1886).—UNDERHILL, J. G.: *Spanish Literature in the England of the Tudors* (Macmillan, New York, 1899).—LEE, S.: *The French Renaissance in England* (Clarendon Press).—COURTHOPE, W. J.: *History of English Poetry*, Vols. I., II. (Macmillan).—BOAS, F. S.: *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Clarendon Press, 1914).

Chapter 2. PROSE-WRITERS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Berners's Froissart and translations of Romances of Chivalry—The Classical Renaissance: Erasmus, Ascham, More, Elyot—Reformation Literature: Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Latimer, the Bible and Prayer Book—Artistic Prose: Lyly's *Euphues* and Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*

THE BEGINNINGS OF PROSE

During the Middle English and Chaucerian periods there was an enormous preponderance of poetry in our literature. This, the normal phenomenon of primitive epochs, was exaggerated by the fact that the writers who naturally inclined to use prose were far more likely to write in Latin or even French than in the English vernacular. The few works in English prose of the 14th century consisted of translations or of didactic or other practical books, such as Mandeville's *Travels*, Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, and that of the encyclopædic treatise of Bartolomæus Anglicus, *De Proprietatibus Rerum*. There was no need for literary airs and graces in such works as these. The translators strove to adapt themselves to readers with little erudition, and in the former two works especially struck out a style racy, intelligible, and popular, and free from affectations.

It was not very different in the early 15th century. Capgrave, Pecock, and Fortescue wrote chiefly in Latin. The few books they wrote in English had some particular object, controversy or propaganda; but though they aimed at plainness, force, and breadth of appeal, they did not wholly shake off the cumbrous habits of style ingrained in men accustomed to think and write in Latin. But the later 15th century showed a great change, a change due mainly to three men, Caxton, Malory, and Berners. Caxton and Malory we have already considered. Berners continued their work, rendering Froissart into English, then certain Continental romances, and starting the elaborate prose style which later developed into Euphuism.

Results of the Invention of Printing.—It is commonly said that the effect of the invention of printing was to stimulate the writing of prose. This is, however, but a partial statement of the case. The art of printing spread so rapidly because of the great increase in the number of readers. Many readers mean a demand for books in prose. Caxton printed Chaucer and other poets, but the bulk of his publications were in prose; and it was the same with the output of the Oxford and St. Albans presses, of Lettou's press in London, and with the books issued by Wynkyn de Worde, Copland, Pynson, and the rest of Caxton's successors.

There was some falling off in the proportion of English books printed, and many

of these were of no particular literary importance. But a large number of romances continued to be turned into English, and the printers employed regular translators for this purpose, to whom we owe renderings of *Beves of Hamtoun, Guy of Warwick, The Three Kings of Cologne, Helyas Knight of the Swan, Kynge Appolyn of Thyre,* and many others. Fabyan's *Chronicles* was among the English books printed in 1516; but a more notable landmark was Berners's *Froissart,* issued in 1523 and 1525.

JOHN BOURCHIER, LORD BERNERS (1467–1533).—Berners was a very different type of writer from the professional translators just mentioned. He was a statesman and soldier, who had served Henry VII., took part in the negotiations between Charles V. and Henry VIII., attended the latter monarch at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and was appointed by him to the office of Captain of Calais, from 1520 to his death.

The Translation of Froissart.—Berners's great translation of Froissart's *Chronicles* is a splendid example of epical prose. He went much further than Malory in deliberately cultivating a sensuous and picturesque vocabulary and a simple, direct style, with studied cadences, perfectly fitted for chivalric narrative. In his own prefaces he carried the development of prose yet a stage beyond, plainly exhibiting those rhetorical tendencies which afterwards found ampler scope in his translation of Guevara's *Libro Aureo.*

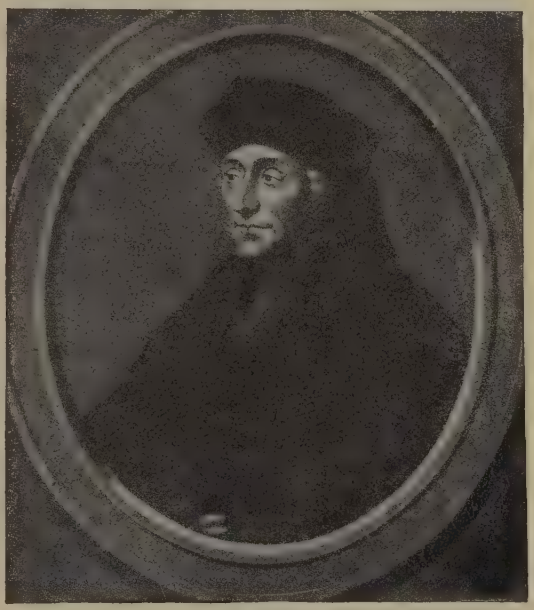
> Thus, whan I advertysed and remembred the manyfolde comodyties of hystorie, howe benefyciall it is to mortall folke, and eke howe laudable and merytoryous a dede it is to write hystories, fixed my mynde to do some thynge therin; and ever whan this ymaginacyon came to me, I volved, tourned, and redde many volumes and bokes, conteyning famouse histories. And amonge all other, I redde dilygently the four volumes or bokes of sir Johan Froyssart of the countrey of Heynaulte, written in the Frenche tonge, whiche I judged comodyous, necessarie, and profytable to be hadde in Englysshe, sithe they treat of the famous actes done in our partes; that is to say, in Englande, Fraunce, Spaygne, Portyngall, Scotlande, Bretayne, Flaunders, and other places adjoyning; and specially they redounde to the honoure of Englysshemen.

The next piece is an average specimen of his narrative style:

> So they rode styll along by the wode, and came to a lytell ryver in a vale nere to the French host. Than they displayed their baners and penons and dasshed their spurres to their horses, and came in a fronte into the Frenche hoost among the Gascoyns, who were nothyng ware of that busshment: they were goynge to supper, and some redy sette at their meate: Henglysshmen cried A Derby, a Derby, and overthrewe tentes and pavylions, and slewe and hurte many. The Frenchmen wyst nat what to do, they were so hasted: when they came into the felde and assembled togyder, they founde the Englysshe archers ther redy to receyve theym, who shotte so feersly, that they slewe man and horse, and hurte many. Therle of Layll was taken prisoner in his owne tente, and sore hurte; and the erle of Pyergourt and sir Roger his uncle in their tentes; and ther was slayne the lord of Duras and sir Aymer of Poycters, and therle of Valentenoys his brother was taken: every man fiedde that myght best; but therle of Conynes, the vycount of Carmayne, and of Villemur, and of Brunquell, and the lorde de la Borde, and of Taryde and other that were loged on the other syde of the castell, drewe back and wente into the feldes with their baners.—Chapter cvii.

His Other Translations.—Berners turned into English the prose recension of *Huon*

of Bordeaux, a popular romance that had grown out of a 13th-century *chanson de geste*. It is the tale in which the fairy Oberon plays an attractive part. The translation is homely work compared with the *Froissart*. Nor can his more ambitious rendering of Guevara's famous book of worldly wisdom, which he called *The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, be compared with that of North, *The Dial of Princes*, or with the more polished euphuism of Lyly and his school. It is nevertheless to Berners that the beginnings in English of that extravagant cult of antithesis, metaphor, and ornate phraseology must be traced. He also translated a Spanish allegorical and sentimental romance, the *Carcel de Amor* of Diego Fernández de San Pedro, and a French romance, *The Hystorye of Arthur of Lytell Brytaine*, which is not really Arthurian but a tissue of impossible adventure in the style of the late *Amadis de Gaula*.



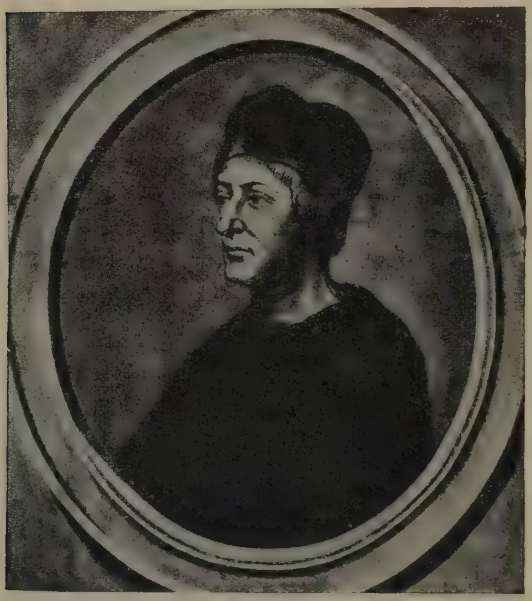
Erasmus.
(From a print in the Forster Collection, S. Kensington Museum.)

THE CLASSICAL RENAISSANCE

Erasmus (1465 or 1467–1536).—The protagonist of the Classical Renaissance in England was not an Englishman. The Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus came to England in 1499, and found there four other men well grounded in Greek erudition—Linacre, Colet, Grocyn, and More. His own learning, urbanity, and wit soon won him a foremost place among them, and he gladly looked on England henceforth as his adopted country. It was through the influence of these fine scholars that Erasmus applied himself to Greek; Colet in especial gave him a new insight into theology, and inspired him with hope of a peaceful reformation in the Church. In 1516 Erasmus brought out his edition of the Greek Testament, with a Latin translation. The genial nature of the man, his sharp observation, and his humour are revealed in his *Colloquies*, his *Letters*, and *Encomium Moriæ* or *The Praise of Folly*.

Other Humanists.—From this band of humanists, theologians, and scholars radiated an influence on education and culture that steadily widened, though it was not yet that its effects began to be manifest in our literature. But the knowledge of

Greek mythology and the inspiration of the Greek classics, essential elements in the greatness of Elizabethan literature, owed everything to the workers who were busy now. The strongest personality among them was that of John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's and founder of St. Paul's School. A well-read and exact scholar, a student of Greek philosophy, and a liberal theologian, he attracted large crowds to his lectures at Oxford on the New Testament, and left a permanent legacy to posterity, not only by endowing a great school, but by his careful provisions for discipline and teaching. He himself prepared a Latin accidence which was not entirely superseded for two centuries, and a year before his death drew up a set of statutes for the governance of his school. William Lily, the grammarian, another accomplished Grecian, was the first high master.



Colet.
(From an old print.)

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535).—The one among this band of humanists who came closest to Erasmus in charm of disposition and humour, and who left titles to immortal fame in the noble manner of his death and in his prophetic book, *Utopia*, was Thomas More, lord chancellor of England. From his diplomatic work in 1515–16 in negotiating a commercial treaty with the Netherlands, More's life became a part of English history. He served the king with loyalty and moderation, but, like Bishop Fisher, refused to take the oath arbitrarily exacted by Henry VIII., impugning the papal authority and affirming the justice of the divorce of Catherine of Aragon. His execution was an act of tyranny that roused indignation throughout civilized Europe. More's *Utopia* was written in Latin, and he wrote many Latin epigrams, besides Latin and English verses of unequal merit. But he translated into English a life of Pico de Mirandola, and his controversial writings in English are important. The following passage is from his *Dialogue concerning Heresies*, in which he opposes Tyndale's views on the free circulation of the Scriptures among the laity :

> But now, when the veyle of the temple is broken asunder, that diuided, among the Iewes, the peple from the sight of the secretes, & that god had sent his holy spirit to be assistent with

his hole church to teche all necessary trouth; though it maye therfore be the better suffred that no part of holy scripture wer kept out of honest ley mens handes, yet wold I that no part therof shoulde come in theirs, which, to their own harme & happely their neybours to, would handle it ouer homely, & be to bold & busy therwith. And also though holye scripture be, as ye saide whyleere, a medicine for him that is sick, & fode for him that is hole; yet sith ther is many a body sore soule-sicke that taketh himself for hole, & in holy scripture is an whole feast of so much diuers vyand, that after the affection & state of sondry stomakes, one may take harme by the selfsame that shall do another good; & sicke folke often haue such a corrupt tallage in their tast, that they most like that mete that is most unholesome for them; it were not therfore, as me thinketh, vnreasonable that the ordinary whom god hath in the dyoces appointed for the chief phisicion, to discerne betwene the hole & the sicke, & betwene disease & disease, should after hys wisedom & discrecion appoynt euery body their part, as he shoulde perceiue to bee good & holesome for them.

Sir Thomas More.
(From the picture by Holbein.)

Sir Thomas Elyot (*c.* 1499–1546).—Sir Thomas Elyot, physician, ambassador, Greek scholar, and author of *The Boke of the Gouernour* (1531), was another enthusiastic advocate of education in the widest sense. *The Gouernour* expounds systematically and at great length the various branches of the education of a gentleman intended to take his due share in the government of his country. Here is what he has to say about horsemanship:

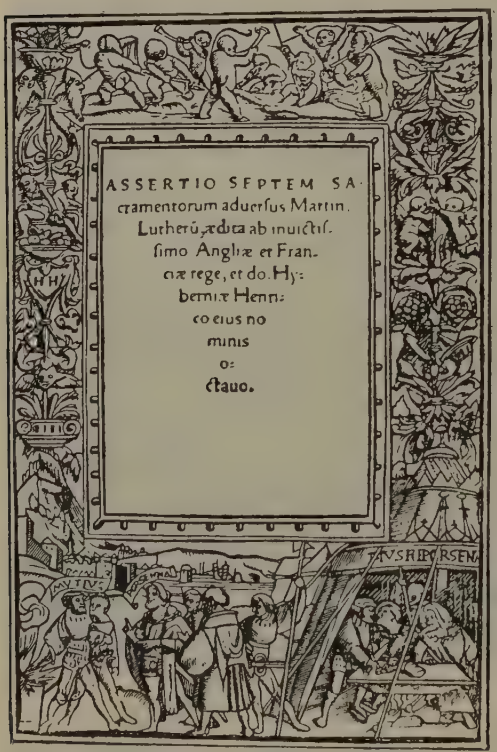
But the moste honorable exercise, in myne opinion, and that besemeth the astate of euery noble persone, is to ryde suerly & clene on a great horse and a roughe, whiche undoubtedly nat onely importeth a meiestie & drede into inferiour persones, beholding him aboue the common course of other men, dauntyng a fierce and cruell beaste, but also is no litle socour, as well in pursuete of enemies & confoundyng them, as in escapyng imminent daunger, whan wisedome therto exhorteth. Also a stronge and hardy horse dothe some-tyme more domage vnder his maister than he with al his waipon: and also setteth forwarde the stroke, and causethe it to lighte with more violence.

Elyot's book was much more than a treatise on pedagogy. It might rather be compared with Xenophon's *Cyropædia;* and its discussions on the relative merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, in which the author pronounces in favour of the first, are another interesting example of the freedom from pedantry and the

spacious worldly wisdom of this group of scholars. The breadth of his reading is manifested by a wealth of anecdote and allusion from classical writers and modern humanists, reading illuminated by the realism and practicality of a man of affairs.

WRITERS ON EDUCATION

Elyot also wrote a book on medical science, *The Castel of Helth*, translated various educational works, and compiled a Latin-English lexicon. These connect him with an important group of men who belong to the history of education rather than of literature, like the Spaniard Vivès and Richard Mulcaster, first head of Merchant Taylors' School, and one of Lily's successors at St. Paul's. Thomas Wilson is a link between these and the other group, of men like Elyot, Erasmus, and Colet, who were educators in a much wider sense. His practical and well-illustrated book on composition, *The Arte of Rhetorique*, would now be classified among educational works, though it is said to have been studied with profit by the chief of our poets.



Title-page of Henry VIII.'s Treatise against Martin Luther.

ROGER ASCHAM (1515–68). — The Yorkshireman Roger Ascham was the most eminent among these writers on practical education. We owe him a grudge, and perhaps he is best remembered by many readers, for his puritanical denunciation of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Ascham was in fact something of a pedant, and did not carry his learning with the ease and grace of some contemporaries. Puritanism seems difficult to reconcile with his devotion to cock-fighting, not to mention his elaborate work on archery and his healthy interest in sports. It showed more respectably in his famous diatribes against the vices imported from the Continent by "Italianate Englishmen." Ascham was a fellow of St. John's, Cambridge, public orator to the university, Latin secretary to Queen Mary, and private tutor for a while to Elizabeth. Every one has read how delighted he was to find Lady Jane Grey reading

Plato's *Phædo* in the original Greek while the rest of the household were away hunting.

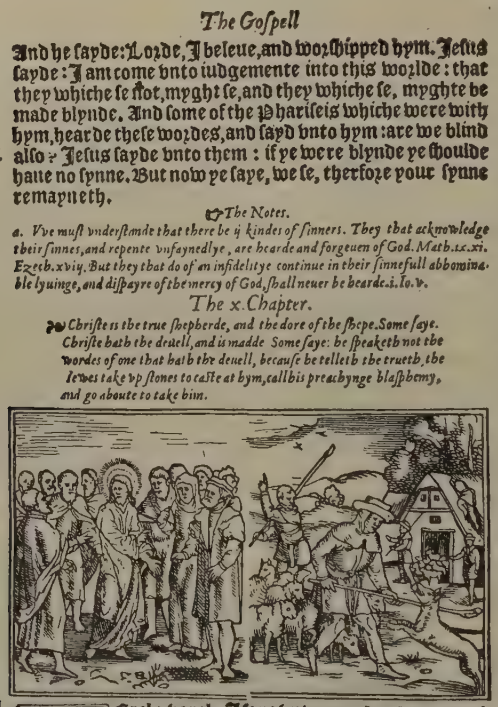
Works.—His *Toxophilus*, a treatise on archery, appeared in 1545; his other large work, *The Scholemaster*, was posthumous. Ascham, in *Toxophilus*, dealt in the form of dialogue with the question of physical training in education, and illustrated the technical and historical side of his subject with inexhaustible quotations from ancient authors. Both books have a fine literary flavour; but they are most important as examples of the contemporary handling of prose. Ascham urged that English matters should be written "in the English tongue for Englishmen." He did indeed succeed in using a thoroughly English vocabulary, in spite of the weight of Latin and Greek learning that encumbered him. But in the structure of his sentences he is less happy, and cannot get away from the habits of Latin prose:

> If any man woulde blame me, eyther for takynge such a matter in hande, or els for writing it in the Englyshe tongue, this answere I make hym, that when the beste of the realme thinke it honeste for them to vse, I, one of the meanest sorte, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write; and though to have written it in an other tonge, had bene bothe more profitable for my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can thinke my labour wel bestowed, yf with a little hynderaunce of my profyt and name, maye come any fourtheraunce, to the pleasure or commoditie of the gentlemen and yeomen of Englande, for whose sake I tooke this matter in hande. And as for ye Latin or greke tonge, euery thing is so excellently done in them, that none can do better: In the Englysh tonge contrary, euery thinge in a manner so meanly, bothe for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse. For therein the least learned for the moste parte, haue ben alwayes moost redye to wryte. And they whiche had least hope in latin, haue bene moste boulde in englyshe: when surelye euery man that is moste ready to taulke, is not moost able to wryte.—*Toxophilus*.

LITERATURE OF THE REFORMATION

The two chief literary products of the Reformation in England were the translation of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Both were the composite work, not only of various hands, but of successive periods of labour. Parts of the Bible had been translated in Wyclif's time, some probably by the reformer himself, other portions at his instigation. To what extent the simple English of these Wyclifite versions was utilized by the Tudor translators it is easy to see; they also used each other's renderings freely, and in the Authorized Version of 1611, at any rate, the outcome of these centuries of pious endeavour, and the best results of many men's efforts, were finally incorporated. In the evolution of the Prayer Book Cranmer bore a leading part. There had been many Primers before Henry VIII. called on him to prepare translations of certain prayers for the *King's Primer* of 1545, which contained the noble Litany, probably the handiwork of Cranmer. In the following reign the diversity caused by various Primers was ended by the issue of the two Prayer Books of Edward VI. in 1549 and 1552. Many problems of doctrine and ritual would have to be considered in a study of the compilation of these two works; but on the literary side it is only necessary to observe that they were

the ultimate result of processes of growth and selection similar to those that gave us the English Bible, and that the dominating mind in the last stages was Cranmer's. We turn to the individual writers who took part in these great tasks and also produced many theological, devotional, and controversial works that have their place in the history of English prose.



The Gospell

And he sayde: Lorde, I beleue, and worshipped hym. Jesus sayde: I am come vnto iudgemente into this worlde: that they whiche se not, myght se, and they whiche se, myghte be made blynde. And some of the Phariseis whiche were with hym, hearde these wordes, and sayd vnto hym: are we blinde also? Jesus sayde vnto them: if ye were blynde ye shoulde haue no synne. But now ye saye, we se, therfore your synne remayneth.

The Notes.

a. We must vnderstande that there be .ij. kindes of sinners. They that acknowledge their sinnes, and repente vnfaynedlye, are heard and forgeuen of God. Math. x. xi. Ezech. xviij. But they that do of an infidelitye continue in their sinnefull abhominable lyuinge, and dispayre of the mercy of God, shall neuer be heard. i. Io. v.

The x. Chapter.

Christe is the true shepherde, and the dore of the shepe. Some saye. Christe hath the deuell, and is madde. Some saye: he speaketh not the wordes of one that hath the deuell, because he telleth the trueth, the Iewes take vp stones to caste at hym, call his preachynge blasphemy, and go about to take him.

The Gospell on the Tewesdaye after Whitsondaye.

Verely, verely I saye vnto you: he that entreth not in by the doze into the shepefolde, but clymmeth vp some other waye, the same is a theefe and a robber. But he that goeth in by the doze, is the shepehearde of the shepe: to hym the porter

Page from Tyndale's quarto Illustrated New Testament, printed by R. Jugge, probably 1553.

(From the Eadie Library.)

WILLIAM TYNDALE (?1484–1536).—The three men of this era to whom the greatest debt stands due for the literary merits of the English Bible in its ultimate form are Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer. William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire and educated at Oxford. He was a disciple of the New Learning, and strongly inclined towards the reformed doctrines then being preached in Germany. His scheme for publishing an English translation of the New Testament met with so little encouragement at home that he went over to Hamburg in 1524, with the intention of printing the book and getting the copies smuggled into this country. But he found the authorities abroad no less difficult. At Cologne, after he had begun to print, his work was stopped, and he fled to Worms, carrying with him some parts already printed. He succeeded at length in completing an octavo and a quarto edition, and sending them to England. But the book was condemned by the bishops, and copies were seized and destroyed, Tyndale himself escaping only by flight from the long arm of Wolsey. Later on he won the approval of Henry VIII. by his views on Church and State, but lost it by his denunciation of the divorce proceedings. His execution at Vilvorde in 1536 was due as much to the political enmity he had stirred up as to the ostensible charge of heresy.

Tyndale's English.—The rhythm of Tyndale's translations from Scripture may be judged by such a passage as this, from Deuteronomy :

> Heare, Israel, let these wordes which I commaunde the this daye steke fast in thine herte / and whette them on thy childerne & talke of them as thou sittest in thine house / and as thou walkest by the way / & when thou liest doune / & when thou risest vppe / & bynde them for a token to thine hande / & let them be a remembraunce betwene thine eyes / & write them on the postes & gates of thine house.

The style of his controversial writings is forcible and trenchant, but rarely attains the same beauty of expression. His vigorous plea for a rendering of the Bible into the vernacular has often been quoted, and should be compared with the views of his opponent, Sir Thomas More :

> The sermons which thou readist in the Actes of the apostles & all that the apostles preached were no doute preached in the mother tonge. Why then mighte they not be written in the mother tonge? As yf one of vs preach a good sermon, why maye it not be written? Saynt hierom also translated the bible in-to his mother tonge. Why maye not we also? They will say, "it can not be translated in-to our tonge, it is so rude." It is not so rude as they are false lyers. For the greke tonge agreeth moare with the english then with the latyne. And the propirties of the hebrue tonge agreth a thousande tymes moare with the english then with the latyne. The maner of speakynge is both one, so that in a thousande places thou neadest not but to translate it in-to the english worde for worde, when thou must seke a com-

The first boke of Mo-
ses, called Genesis.
The first dayes worke.
The seconde dayes worke.
The first Chapter.
In the begynnynge God created heauen & earth: and the earth was voyde and empte, and darcknes was vpon the depe & spirite of God moued vpo the water.
And God sayde: let there be light, & there was light. And God sawe the light that it was good. Then God deuyded the light from the darcknes, and called the light, Daye: and the darcknes, Night. Then of the euenynge and mornynge was made the first daye.
And God sayde: let there be a firmament betwene the waters, and let it deuyde the waters a sunder. Then God made the firmamēt, and parted the waters vnder the firmamēt, from the waters above the firmamēt: And so it came to passe. And God called the firmament, Heauen. Then of the euenynge & mornynge was made the seconde daye.
And God sayde: let the waters vnder heauen gather thēselues vnto one place, & the drye londe maye appeare. And so it came to passe. And God called the drye londe, Earth: and the gatheringe together of waters called he, The See. And God sawe that it was good.
And God sayde: let the earth bringe forth grene grasse and herbe, that beareth sede: & frute full trees, that maye beare frute euery one after his kynde, hauynge their owne sede in them selues vpon the earth. And so it came to passe. And the earth broughte forth grene grasse and herbe, that beareth sede euery one after his kynde, & trees bearinge frute,

The Coverdale Bible, first edition, 1535.
(Opening verses of Genesis i.)

passe in the latyne, and yet shalt have moch worke to translate it wel-faveredly, so that it have the same grace and swetnesse, sence and pure vnderstandinge with it in the latyne, as it hath in the hebrue.

THOMAS CRANMER (1489–1556).—Cranmer's fine work on the Prayer Book has been alluded to already. He became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, his convenient views on the king's marriage with Catherine of Aragon having won the royal favour. In the king's later matrimonial affairs Cranmer showed himself equally pliant. His conduct towards the unfortunate Protector Somerset, in the next reign, was not distinguished by courage; and the glory of his martyrdom under Mary was clouded by the weakness of his previous recantations. He wrote well in Latin and in English, and the noble English of his prayers, exhortations, and homilies enables those of his own composition to be singled out with some certainty from the devotional books and collections of homilies prepared under his authority. The English liturgy and the English Bible owe more to Cranmer than to any other individual, and are his best apologia.

Archbishop Cranmer.
(From a portrait by G. Flicctus.)

OTHER DIVINES.—Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, published a Bible said to be translated from the Dutch (or German) and Latin, but principally based on the Zurich Bible and Tyndale's version of the New Testament. It contained the Apocrypha, and the edition of 1535 was the first complete edition of the Scriptures printed in English. A revised edition appeared in 1539, and is known to history as the Great Bible. The edition of 1540, which contained a preface by the archbishop, was known as Cranmer's Bible. This formed one of the main English foundations of our Authorized Version. Coverdale's finest memorial is the Psalter in the English Prayer Book, unsurpassed in its rhythmical beauty. Bishop Latimer (? 1481–1555), who suffered martyrdom with Ridley, was noted for the vigour and homely picturesqueness of his sermons—"On the Card," "On the Ploughers," etc.—of which only defective copies have come down to us. Much more voluminous are the works left by the Scots reformer John Knox, comprising sermons, tracts, including the notorious *Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* that provoked Elizabeth's ire, and the posthumous *History of the Reformation in Scotland*. The *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* and other works of his compatriot, the great scholar and reformer George Buchanan, are nearly all in Latin, and have little to do with English literary history.

ARTISTIC PROSE

The Beginnings of Style in Prose.—The efforts to elaborate a prose style having intrinsic charms parallel to those of verse continued after Berners; but a really distinctive form of prose was not evolved till the beginning of the Elizabethan era. Euphuism was not any one man's invention, though it owes its name to

Latimer preaching at St. Paul's Cross.
(*From a picture by George Hayter*)

Lyly's book. There are alliterative and antithetical turns of speech, and other anticipations of Lyly's style, in Latimer, in Ascham, and in the translators who were now becoming more than ever industrious. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse* (1579), Saintsbury points out, shows "that he must rather have mastered the Lylian style in the same circumstances as Lyly, than have borrowed it from his fellow at Oxford." In 1576, two years before *Euphues*, George Pettie, in his *Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*, displayed all the preciosities of the euphuistic dialect, and is acclaimed by one critic at least as the real creator of euphuism, Lyly being dismissed as a mere imitator. At all events, *Euphues* gave the most extravagant and at the same

time the most successful form of a decorative style which may seem wearisome and absurd to modern readers, but which eventually had a salutary and far-reaching effect on the growth of English prose.

JOHN LYLY (?1554–1606).—Lyly's dramatic works do not concern us here. His importance at this stage lies in his brilliant experiment of a new prose and a new fiction. *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit* (1578), with its sequel, *Euphues and his England* (1580), is often called " the first English novel "—a phrase that depends upon our definitions. *Euphues* was really a new hybrid, and, like other hybrids, never had any issue. Its serious didactic tone and the peculiarities of its style stand in sharp contrast with the old romances and the Italian *novella* that was now coming in; its adoption of a philosophic attitude to contemporary life, and its grave studies of character, of personal relations, and of the subtleties of emotion, herald the novel of manners. But *Euphues* retained far more of the essential features of the " moral court treatise," or book of worldly wisdom (such as Guevara's *Libro Aureo* on which it was closely modelled, and older English works like *The Babees' Boke* (1475), or Elyot's *Gouernour* and Ascham's *Scholemaster*), than it introduced of the more artistic ingredients, character and incident. It is not a novel, but a series of meditative debates, with a thread of love-story serving to illustrate the author's criticisms of society. It might, indeed, be compared with such miscellanies as Addison's *Spectator* and Johnson's *Rambler*, but that the real world makes such a faint show. The characters are vague idealisms: the folly of youth, the " wisdom of eld," the " fickleness of woman," these are the real *dramatis personæ* of this prose morality. We are told that the scene is Athens, Naples, or London, but there is no more representation of those places than when the early stage-manager put up his notice signifying where the imaginary action was laid. In his *Glasse for Europe* Lyly describes the British Isles in a detached and abstract way, as if he were introducing the reader to some fabulous realm in *Amadis* or *Palmerin*.

Euphuism.—The Lylian style aimed at a richness, a variety of ornament, and an artificiality of structure, novel and striking to the reader, and furnishing some equivalent for the charms of metrical language. The structure was based on antithesis, accented by the rhythm of balanced clauses and by alliteration. The diction was enriched by a profusion of metaphor, simile, and other figures, for which the beasts, the magic stones, the physical and chemical affinities of a mythical science, provided material. Take it where you will, the vivacity of the style is inexhaustible:

> Don Ferardo one of the chiefe gouernours of the citie, who although he had a cortly crew of gentlewomen soiourning in his pallaice, yet his daughter, heire to his whole reuenewes stayned ye beautie of them al, whose modest bashfulnes caused the other to looke wanne for enuie, whose Lilly cheekes dyed with a Vermilion red, made the rest to blush for shame. For as the finest Ruby stayneth ye coulour of the rest that be in place, or as the Sunne dimmeth the Moone, that she cannot be discerned, so this gallant girle more faire then fortunate, and yet more fortunate

then faithful, eclipsed the beautie of them all, and chaunged their colours. Vnto hir had Philautus accesse, who wan hir by right of loue, and should haue worne hir by right of law, had not Euphues by straunge destenie broken the bones of mariage, and forbidden the banes of Matrimony.

. . . . . .

True it is Philautus that hee which toucheth the Nettle tenderly, is soonest stoung: that the Flye which playeth with the fire, is singed in the flame, that he that dalyeth with women is drawne to his woe. And as the Adamant draweth the heauie yron, the Harpe the fleete Dolphin, so beautie allureth the chast minde to loue, and the wisest witte to lust. . . . The Vine watered with Wine, is soone withered: the blossome in the fattest ground, is quickly blasted: the Goat the fatter shee is, the lesse fertile she is: yea man, the more wittie he is, the lesse happy he is.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554–86).—Philip Sidney, son of the soldier and statesman Sir Henry Sidney, impressed his contemporaries and has fascinated the modern world with a personality that seems an embodiment of the idealism, the valour, the keen intelligence, and the practical accomplishment of his age. Educated at Shrewsbury and at Christ Church, Oxford, where he formed lifelong friendships with Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, and the poet Edward Dyer, he continued the most liberal of educations by travel on the Continent, intercourse with the leading intellects of Europe—the Huguenot Languet, William the Silent, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese—and by the wide reading in ancient and modern authors evident in his *Apologie for Poetrie*. At the English court he was both admired and loved. Elizabeth petted him, but gave him no important office. He was intimate with Spenser, supported the attempts of William Webbe and Gabriel Harvey to naturalize classical metres, and took up the cudgels in defence of the theatre against the attack of Gosson in *The Schoole of Abuse*. He had been in love with Penelope Devereux, the "Stella" of his sonnets, who married Lord Rich, from whom she was afterwards divorced to marry her lover, the Earl of Devonshire. Sidney married Frances, daughter of Walsingham, but—in poetry at any rate—continued his addresses to "Stella." The touching episode of his death is too well known for repetition.

Sir Philip Sidney.

Works.—None of Sidney's works was printed in his lifetime. His love sonnets first appeared in a surreptitious edition in 1591, under the title of *Astrophel and Stella*, and were afterwards reprinted with additions in the *Arcadia* of 1598. His poetry, which belongs in spirit to a later tradition than the prose,

is treated in a later section. The *Apologie for Poetrie* was written about 1581, but not published till 1595. The first edition of the *Arcadia* appeared in 1590, part of the third and a fourth and fifth book being added in the second edition of 1593.

Man of Letters and Man of Action.—It is impossible to sum up Sidney's character better than is done by his friend and biographer, Fulke Greville, who says :

> Indeed he was a true modell of Worth ; a man fit for Conquest, Plantation, Reformation, or what Action soever is greatest, and hardest among men : Withall, such a lover of Mankind and Goodnesse, that whatsoever had any reall parts, in him found comfort, participation, and protection to the uttermost of his power ; like Zephyrus he giving life where he blew.

Prose Writings.—The *Apologie for Poetrie* is the work of a youthful poet, and with the ardour and imagination of youth has many of its shortcomings. Though he was misled by his classical training into denouncing the mixture of comedy with tragedy, and upholding the strictest observance of the unities, he gives us an extraordinary insight into the creative force and exuberance that made Elizabethan poetry. He expounds the accepted doctrine that all literature of an imaginative or idealistic nature is comprehended under the head of poetry.

> For Xenophon, who did imitate so excellently as to give us the portraiture of a just Empire under the name of Cyrus, made therein an absolute heroicall poem. So did Heliodorus in his sugared invention of that picture of love in Theagines and Cariclea. And yet both writ in prose : which I speak to show, that it is not riming and versing that maketh a poet, no more than a longe gowne maketh an Advocate.

Style.—It follows that Sidney was at one with Lyly in his theory of artistic prose. But though his style is often as rich as that of *Euphues*, it is much more conservative in structure, and only in the more elaborate and cloying periods of the *Arcadia* do we find any close imitation of the euphuistic artifices which he condemned in the *Apologie*. The classical tradition is obvious in the following :

> Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapistry, as divers Poets have done, neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers, nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth too lovely. Her world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden. But let those things alone and goe to man, for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her uttermost cunning is imployed, and knowe whether shee have brought foorth so true a lover as Theagines, so constant a friende as Pilades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a Prince as Xenophons Cyrus, so excellent a man every way as Virgils Aeneas : neither let this be iestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essensiall, the other, in imitation or fiction : for any understanding knoweth the skil of the Artificer standeth in that Idea or fore-conceite of the work, and not in the work it selfe. . . . Neyther let it be deemed too sawcie a comparison to ballance the highest poynt of mans wit with the efficacie of Nature : but rather give right honor to the heavenly Maker of that maker ; who having made man to his owne likenes, set him beyond and over all the workes of that second nature : which in nothing hee sheweth so much as in Poetrie ; when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth far surpassing her dooings, with no small argument to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam : sith our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it.

The Romancer.—Lyly's *Euphues* was in its analytical tendencies and its criticism of life an anticipation of the modern novel; Sidney's *Arcadia* belongs in essence to the stock of chivalric romance, blended with the pastoral strain. They have this in common, however, that the story, such as it is, with its straggling web of intrigue, is an original invention. But in *Euphues* the plot is a mere device, a framework for the author's theorizing about life. In the *Arcadia* the story is everything. Sidney wrote it for the entertainment of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, while he was exiled from the court and living at Wilton House. He conceived it as a poem, imaging a more beautiful world than the actual, laying his scene in a remote Utopian land which he identifies with the ancient Arcadia. Both action and characters body forth his ideals of chivalrous virtue, heroic energy, and passionate love, and express his longing for a simpler and purer fashion of life than was his own lot amidst the pomps and frivolities of Elizabeth's court. In many places the style is as affected as Lyly's at its worst:

> In her face so much beauty and favour expressed as, if Helen had not been known, some would rather have judged it the painter's exercise to show what he could do than the counterfeiting of any living pattern; for no fault the most fault-finding wit could have found, if it were not that to the rest of the body the face was somewhat too little, but that little was such a spark of beauty as was able to inflame a world of love; for everything was full of a choice fineness, that if we wanted anything in majesty it supplied it with increase in pleasure; and if at the first it struck not with admiration, it ravished with delight.—*Arcadia*, Book I.

Conclusion.—The style of *Euphues* was imitated, and the model set by the *Arcadia* copied, by the other novelists of the Elizabethan era, as will be shown more in detail later. Thus the tendencies observed in the prose of Lord Berners can be followed for a century or more, and it is not difficult to trace them even in such a mighty prose-master as Sir Thomas Browne, if we follow the track set by that remarkable intervening work, Drummond of Hawthornden's *Cypresse Grove*.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—*Specimens of English Literature*, 1394–1579, ed. W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press, 1894); Berners's *Froissart*, ed. W. P. Ker (6 vols., Tudor Translations, Dent, 1901–3; abridged by G. C. Macaulay, Globe ed., Macmillan, 1895); Berners's translation of *Huon of Bordeaux* (E.E.T.S., 4 parts, 1882–7; Everyman, Dent, 1912); More's *Utopia* (various translations, the best by Raphe Robynson, ed. Arber, Lumby, etc.; ed. George Sampson, Bell, 1914); Elyot's *Boke called the Gouernour*, ed. H. H. S. Croft (1883); ed. Foster Watson (Everyman, Dent, 1907); Ascham's *Scholemaster*, ed. W. Aldis Wright (Cambridge University Press, 1904); Lyly's *Euphues*, ed. M. W. Croft and H. Clemons (Routledge, 1916); Sidney's *Sonnets and Songs* (Burleigh, 1900); *Poems*, ed. J. Drinkwater (Muses' Library, Routledge); *Apologie for Poetrie*, ed. E. S. Shuckburgh (Pitt Press, 1891); *Arcadia*, ed. E. A. Baker (Early Novelists, Routledge, 1907).

Studies and Criticisms.—Wilson, J. D.: *John Lyly* (Macmillan, 1905).—Jusserand, J. J.: *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*, trans. E. Lee, 3rd ed. (Unwin, 1899).—Raleigh, W.: *The English Novel* (Murray, 1894).—Westcott, B. F.: *General View of the History of the English Bible*, 3rd ed. revised by Aldis Wright (1905).

Chapter 3. EARLY TUDOR POETRY

Tottel's Miscellany—Sir Thomas Wyatt—The Earl of Surrey—Nicholas Grimald—*A Mirror for Magistrates*—Thomas Sackville

TOTTEL'S MISCELLANY

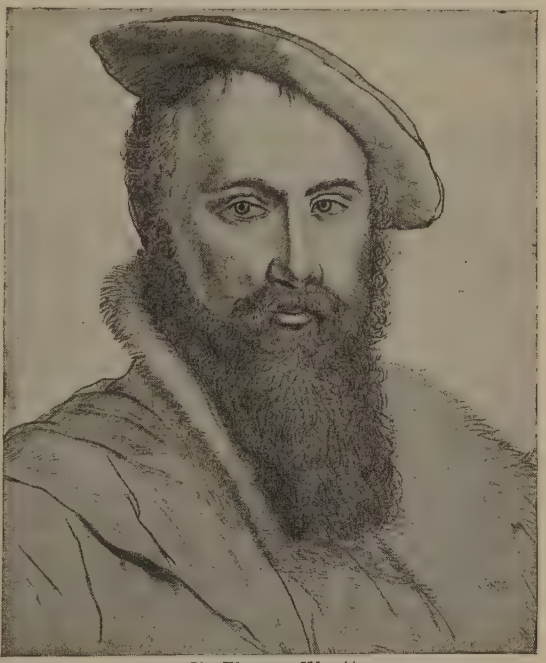
An "Octavian" Collection.—The importance of the reign of Henry VIII. in the history of English poetry has for various reasons been insufficiently recognized. The momentous events of the reign in the political, religious, and domestic spheres would in any case have absorbed the main interest of posterity. But partly owing to the national preoccupation with affairs of state, partly to the reluctance of men of rank to come forward as professed authors, most of the verse written by the courtiers of the second Tudor sovereign did not find its way into print till a decade after his death. In June 1557 a London printer, Richard Tottel, published a volume, *Songes and Sonettes, written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Haward late Earle of Surrey, and others*. Surrey, who was doubtless singled out for mention on the title-page because of his exalted rank, had been dead for more than ten years, and Sir Thomas Wyatt, the other chief contributor, for fifteen years. Nicholas Grimald, who ranks next in importance as author of forty poems in *Tottel's Miscellany*,[1] belonged to a younger generation, but he had been active as an academic dramatist, and probably as a lyrist, in the later years of Henry VIII. Thomas, Lord Vaux, two of whose poems appear in the *Miscellany*, had been one of the king's courtiers, and among the "uncertain" or anonymous authors included in it there were doubtless others of the same group. Thus the *Miscellany* is (to adopt a convenient designation) mainly an "Octavian" collection of song. But as it was published in the year before Elizabeth's accession, and as six editions appeared during her reign, its true literary perspective has been somewhat obscured. Moreover, recent investigation has increasingly shown that the most important section of the volume is the work of Wyatt, who is earliest in date among the chief contributors.

SIR THOMAS WYATT

Life.—Sir Thomas Wyatt, eldest son of Sir Henry Wyatt, who held high offices under the first two Tudor kings, was born at Allington Castle, Kent, in 1503. He was educated at the newly founded St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took his M.A. degree in 1519–20. Soon afterwards he married Elizabeth, daughter of Lord Cobham, a Kentish neighbour. Their son, the ill-fated Thomas Wyatt the younger, was born in 1521. But if tradition, supported by some enigmatic refer-

[1] In the second edition, July 31, 1557, thirty of Grimald's poems were omitted, and thirty-nine additional poems by "uncertain authors" were inserted.

ences in Wyatt's own poetry, is to be trusted, he came for a time under the spell of Anne Boleyn's beauty and wit. The period of their intimacy was probably about 1525, for they are both mentioned as being present at the court Christmas revels of that year. In the following March Wyatt accompanied Sir Thomas Cheney on a mission to France, which was the beginning of a long period of diplomatic and official service abroad. In 1527 he took part in a mission to the Papal States, and also visited Venice, Florence, and other Italian towns. From 1528 to 1532 he was Marshal of Calais. On his return to England he acted as chief ewer at the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533; when the queen fell in May 1536, he was imprisoned for a short time in the Tower, and afterwards sent to Allington Castle to "amend his conduct" under his father's eye. The circumstances are obscure, but in any case Wyatt did not long remain out of the royal favour. In March 1537 he was appointed ambassador to Spain, where he spent the greater part of the two following years. On his return to England in May 1539 he was for some months at Allington, to which he had succeeded on his father's death during his residence abroad. But in November he again left England as ambassador-extraordinary to the Emperor in Flanders. On his return in May 1540 he was rewarded with gifts of land and houses in London and Kent; but the fall of Thomas Cromwell in July caused a reverse in his fortunes. After a period of retirement at Allington, he was arrested on the accusation of Bonner, the Bishop of London, and committed to the Tower in January 1541. But the powerful defence that he made at his trial in March procured his acquittal, and in April he was again sent to Calais on a military mission. Afterwards he sat in Parliament as a knight of the shire for Kent. In October 1542 he was suddenly sent to Falmouth to meet the Spanish ambassador, but he fell ill on the way, and died at Sherborne, where he was buried in the abbey.



Sir Thomas Wyatt.
(From a drawing in S. Kensington Museum.)

Wyatt and Chaucer.—Wyatt's career has some remarkable points of similarity to

that of Chaucer. Both exercised the poetic art in the intervals of a busy official life; both came while on diplomatic missions under the influence of the literatures of France and Italy; both sat in Parliament as knights of the shire for Kent; both went through dramatic changes of fortune owing to political events. But it is not merely in this external way that Wyatt is related to the greatest of his predecessors. His debt to Chaucer has been insufficiently recognized, partly owing to the famous reference by George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) to

> a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir *Thomas Wyat* th'elder and *Henry* Earle of Surrey were the two chieftaines, who hauing trauailed into Italie, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie, as nouices newly crept out of the schooles of *Dante*, *Arioste*, and *Petrarch*, they greatly pollished our rude and homely maner of vulgar Poesie from that it had bene before, and for that cause may iustly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile.

From this passage it would appear as if the "courtly makers" were solely under the dominion of foreign masters, and had broken completely with the earlier traditions of English poetry. But Wyatt, who in his first satire takes credit to himself that he is not one to

> Praise Sir Thopas for a noble tale,
> And scorn the story that the Knight told,

had been an enthusiastic reader of Chaucer in the edition published by Richard Pynson in 1526.[1] Pynson's volume included poems that are now known to be non-Chaucerian, and it presents a rhythmically imperfect text, owing to the frequent omission of the syllabic *e*. But it provided Wyatt with the model for his five-foot line, which, in his autograph MSS. rather than in the smoother version preferred by Tottel, has five stresses but is syllabically irregular. From Chaucer, too, he borrowed, in his earlier poems, the Romance accentuation of the final, instead of the root syllable, in words like "seasòn" and "pleasùre," which is so marked and disconcerting a feature of his rhyming system; as well as various peculiarities of spelling, grammar, and phraseology.

Wyatt's Lyrics.—Nor was it only through Chaucer that Wyatt reached back to the poetry of mediæval England. It was the fashion in the gay court of Henry VIII. for the king himself and his companions to write songs for music, in accepted forms and on traditional themes, often with a chorus or refrain. There is nothing more delightful in this kind than Wyatt's lines beginning:

> A Robyn,
> Joly Robyn,
> Tell me how thy leman doeth,
> And thou shalt know of mine,

which were set to music by William Cornish, and immortalized on the lips of the Fool in *Twelfth Night*. Other short flights of song, usually some form of love-com-

[1] This has been made clear by Miss A. K. Foxwell in her study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems

plaint, are in tripping measures of two or three feet. And from such dainty trifles Wyatt, when deeply stirred, can rise to true lyrical poignancy, as in

> As if an eye may save or slay,
> And strike more deep than weapon long,

or

> My Lute awake! perform the last
> Labour that thou and I shall wast.

These two poems and others carry over from popular native poetry the refrain that ends each stanza, but they have a fire and intensity that are the notes of a new age.

Italian Influence: the Sonnet.—Other of Wyatt's lyrics show French influence, especially some of his rondeaux, which contain echoes from those of Clément Marot. But the French influence cannot always be clearly distinguished from the Italian, and it is not as the disciple of Marot and St. Gelais, but of Petrarch and Serafino, of Alamanni and Aretino, that Wyatt opens a new era in English poetry. Chaucer had borrowed plots and materials from the Italian masters of narrative verse, but it was left for Wyatt, a century and a half later, to be the first to acclimatize the sonnet, the epigram, and *terza rima*.

Wyatt's sonnets number thirty-one, twenty of which have been traced to Italian originals. Seventeen of these are translated or adapted from Petrarch, but Wyatt is no slavish follower of his master either in form or sentiment. He adopts (with very few exceptions) the Petrarchan rhyming scheme (*a b b a, a b b a*) in the octave, but in the sestet he generally rhymes *c d d c e e*. He thus introduces a final couplet, inadmissible in Italian, and substitutes for the "dying fall" of the original sestet the "clinching" effect of a closing rhyme. In all its variations the Elizabethan sonnet clung to the final couplet. Wyatt's innovation held sway till the time of Milton, and when he introduced the strict Petrarchan form, the sonnet was about to disappear from English poetry for a century and a half.

In other ways Wyatt showed his independence. With the "conceits" and love-languors of the Southern school he mingled a more robust and defiant strain, and he skilfully adapted Petrarchan lines to his own circumstances. Thus the Italian's sonnet CXC, "Una candida cerva," becomes "Whoso list to hunt: I know where is an hind," with obvious reference to Anne Boleyn; and "Rotta è l'alta colonna" is turned into "The pillar perished is wherto I lent," a lamentation on the fall of Thomas Cromwell. Still more personal are some of the sonnets which are apparently quite original, as when he declares that he will not bewail the fickleness of his lady:

> But let it pass and think it is of kind,
> That often change doth please a woman's mind;

or bids lucky lovers do observance to May, while he lies in bed remembering "the haps most unhappy" that have befallen him in that month.

Epigrams in Ottava Rima.—But the sonnet asks more than Wyatt's experimental

art could give. He shows greater mastery over a simpler verse-form, *ottava rima* (*a b a b a b c c*), in which most of his thirty-one epigrams are written. Here he borrows chiefly from Serafino, but there is a larger proportion than in the sonnets of original verse, as in the epigrams apparently referring to Anne Boleyn (" What word is that that changeth not," and " Some time I fled the fire that me brent ") ; those written during his Spanish embassy, including " Tagus, farewell " ; the touching invocation to " Luckes, my fair falcon," and his lament in prison, " Sighs are my food : drink are my tears," addressed to Sir Francis Brian.

Satires in Terza Rima.—To Brian Wyatt also dedicated one of his three Satires, the other two being addressed to his friend John Poynz. These three poems, each approximately about a hundred lines in length, are written in *terza rima*, the metre used by Luigi Alamanni in his Satires, one of which Wyatt skilfully adapts to his own circumstances when he was confined in Allington Castle in 1536. He protests to Poynz that he cannot use the courtier's arts of flattery and deceit, and that he is thus driven to his country home where, though a clog hangs at his heel, he yet is free

> to hunt and to hawk,
> And in foul weather at my book to sit.

In the second Satire there is the same contrast of city and country in the homely fable of the " field " and " townish " mouse, probably borrowed from Horace, but retold with humorous zest, and with the moral of contentment with one's lot powerfully driven home. The third Satire, which is again Horatian in origin, is a dialogue between Wyatt and Brian, in which the former gives his friend cynical instructions " how to bring in as fast as thou dost spend," and assures him that " an honest name " is synonymous with " honest poverty."

The Penitential Psalms.—The moral fervour of the Satires turns to the pleading of a contrite heart in the Penitential Psalms. Pietro Aretino had paraphrased these seven Psalms in Italian prose, with a series of " Prologues " to link them together. Wyatt put the Prologues into *ottava rima* and the Psalms into *terza rima*, stripping away much of Aretino's embroidery of Catholic doctrine and natural description, and thus reverting more closely to the austere solemnity of the original. Metrical versions of the Psalms were popular at the time throughout Western Europe ; thus alone among Wyatt's writings the Penitential Psalms were separately published by Thomas Raynald and John Harrington in 1549, as " very pleasant and profettable to the godly reader."

The words have a certain aptness to all Wyatt's verse. He is throughout the man of affairs and the moralist rather than the artist and sworn servant of the Muse. Yet because his interests were mainly not insular but European, he brought English poetry again into the great tradition that descends from Greece to Rome, and thence to Italy, France, and Spain. The man who first taught the sonnet, *ottava rima*,

and *terza rima* to lisp in English accents, and who yet did not lose touch with native mediæval minstrelsy and stood strongly rooted in the Kentish soil of his birth, may well claim to rank, whatever his technical limitations, as the most significant figure in English poetry between Chaucer and Spenser.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

Life.—The fine elegy in which the Earl of Surrey mourns Wyatt's death links the elder and the younger poet, as Collins two centuries later is similarly linked with Thomson. Henry Howard, eldest son of Lord Thomas Howard, was born about 1516, and became, by courtesy, Earl of Surrey in 1524, when his father succeeded to the dukedom of Norfolk. His "childish years," as he himself tells, were spent at Windsor "with a king's son," the Duke of Richmond, a natural son of Henry VIII., who became his brother-in-law. His own marriage took place, when he was about sixteen, to Lady Frances Vere, and the two poems, "O Happy Doves! that may embrace," and "Good Ladies! ye that have your pleasures in exile," seem to have been written by him to express her grief when he went overseas. But some of his own sonnets, and an episode in Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, have linked his name with that of "Geraldine," Lady Elizabeth FitzGerald, a daughter of the Earl of Kildare, and a member of the household of Princess Mary. As Surrey met her when she was about nine years old, and as at fifteen she married Sir Anthony Browne, his love-verses to her seem to have been written merely according to a poetic formula. If tradition thus associates Surrey, like Wyatt, with a mistress of noble Irish blood, the two poets were also akin in their careers and fortunes. Surrey was in turn courtier, soldier, envoy abroad, and prisoner in the Fleet on various charges. In 1543 and 1544 he won military honour at the sieges of Landrecies and Boulogne, but on his return he was arrested, imprisoned at Windsor, and finally executed on a charge of high treason on January 19, 1547.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.

Surrey as a Lyrist.—The tragic and untimely fate of one so highly born, and dowered with "the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword," made Surrey the "Marcellus" of his time, and secured him, in comparison with Wyatt, rather more than his due of contemporary fame. As a lyrist he surpasses Wyatt in his

feeling for natural beauty and in his instinct for melodious rhythm. Both qualities are illustrated in the opening lines of the first sonnet in Tottel:

> The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
> With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale.
> The nightingale, with feathers new, she sings,
> The turtle to her make hath told her tale;

in the earlier sections of the poem beginning:

> The sun when he hath spread his rays,
> And showed his face ten thousand ways;

and, after another fashion, in the charming pastoral ballad, "Phillida was a fair maid," ascribed to Surrey in *England's Helicon*.

But Nature, in the renewal of her spring beauty, is with Surrey a foil to the hopeless lover's withered heart, and his sweetest utterance is a long-drawn sigh. Though his direct borrowings from the Italian are much fewer than Wyatt's, he is far more deeply infected by the lachrymose sentimentality of the Petrarchan school.

Surrey's "English" Sonnet.—But in technique Surrey broke away from the Italian models. Wyatt, though he introduced a closing couplet, had otherwise preserved the Petrarchan form of the sonnet. Surrey substituted three alternately rhyming quatrains followed by a couplet. He thus sacrificed the structural balance and delicately interwoven rhyme-scheme of the original model. The new quatorzain had a stateliness and mobility of its own, but it scarcely deserved so miraculous a piece of good fortune as to become transfigured for all time in Shakespeare's hands.

Poulter's Measure.—No such happy fate awaited another of Surrey's favourite measures, the couplet consisting of an Alexandrine or twelve-syllabled line followed by a "fourteener." It was dubbed "Poulter's measure," from the custom of poulterers giving twelve for one dozen and fourteen for another. Used occasionally by Wyatt, and popularized by Surrey in a number of lyrics and in Paraphrases from the Psalms and Ecclesiastes, this lumbering metre so hit the taste of the time that Gascoigne, writing in 1575, could speak of it as "the commonest sort of verse which we use nowadays."

Blank-verse Translation of Virgil.—In nearly all his metrical experiments Surrey had cultivated economy of rhymes, and he was perhaps scarcely conscious himself that he was taking a revolutionary step when he abandoned rhyme altogether in his version of Books II. and IV. of the *Æneid*. Unrhymed metres were, of course, indigenous in English poetry, but they were based on accent and alliteration. The decasyllabic unrhymed and (save for ornament) unalliterated line was, therefore, a more profoundly significant novelty than the sonnet or *terza rima*. Well might John Day, who (as has been recently shown)[1] published Surrey's translation of

[1] See Miss Willcock's articles in *Modern Language Review*, Vols. XIV. ii., and XV. ii.

Book IV. about the end of 1554, speak of it as "drawn into a strange metre." On June 21, 1557, about a fortnight after the appearance of the *Miscellany*, Tottel issued the Earl's versions of both Books II. and IV. Surrey was probably influenced by Italian translations into *versi sciolti*; Book IV. of the *Æneid* had appeared in this form in 1534, Book II. in 1539, and the first six Books in 1541. But his knowledge of these is conjectural, and he may, without any suggestion from them, have sought in an unrhymed metre to reproduce the effect of the classical hexameter, though he did not hesitate to borrow apt phrases and epithets from Gawain Douglas's earlier rhymed version. In any case, his translation has an individual stamp, and is of remarkable quality. Surrey's inborn rhythmical instinct, which was his chief poetic gift, and his sensibility to suffering, fitted him to be an interpreter of Virgil, and the woe of forsaken Dido was a theme after his own heart:

> Her comely breast thrice and four times she smote
> With her own hand, and tore her golden tress.
> "O Jove," quoth she, "shall he then thus depart,
> A stranger thus! and scorn our kingdom so?
> Shall not my men do on their armour prest,
> And eke pursue them throughout all the town?
> Out of the road soon shall the vessel warp.
> Haste on! cast flame, set sail, and wield your oars!"

Experiment there is here, but no fumbling. The "strange metre" in its swaddling-clothes may be greeted as worthy of the august destinies to which it was born.

NICHOLAS GRIMALD

Blank-verse and other Poems.—It is curious that in the *Miscellany* itself there are two short blank-verse translations by another hand, that of Nicholas Grimald, who (as has been already mentioned) contributed forty poems to the first edition. Grimald was born in Huntingdonshire in 1519, was educated at Cambridge, and thence migrated to Oxford, where he distinguished himself as an academic dramatist. He afterwards became chaplain to Bishop Ridley, for whom he translated some controversial theological works. He was imprisoned for a time under Mary, but was released, apparently after a recantation, and lived till 1562.

Grimald, while at Oxford, paraphrased in 1548 Virgil's *Georgics* into Latin prose. He had, therefore, special reason to be interested in Surrey's rendering of the *Æneid*, and it would be worth knowing if he had read Book IV. in the 1554 edition before he made the two attempts in blank verse mentioned above, which together run to about 200 lines. They are both from recondite Latin sources; one is a version of an episode in the *Alexandreis*, a 12th-century epic by Philippe Gaultier, and the other of a fragment on the death of Cicero in the *Juvenilia* of Theodore Beza. Grimald's blank verse lacks the sweetness of Surrey's, and the constant alliteration becomes monotonous, but the skilful use at times of the run-on line is the herald of greater things to come in greater hands.

Grimald's other poems are chiefly in rhymed couplets, either in decasyllables, poulter's measure or "fourteeners." Of these the most successful are his elegies, which unite dignity and warmth of feeling, especially in the lines upon his school friend W. Chambers, and in the "funeral song" upon his mother, with its cry of pain, "My love, my life, of joy my jewel is gone."

A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

Editions and Contents.—According to his own account, Thomas Churchyard was one of the "uncertain authors" in Tottel's volume. It is unfortunate that we cannot identify his contribution, for his is the only name known to us that links the *Miscellany* with *A Mirror for Magistrates*. The plunge from one to the other is disconcerting. From the atmosphere of Continental humanism, the metrical experiments and individual utterances that mark a new poetic orientation, we go back to a sombre mediævalism, where Lydgate calls the tune which is chanted in wearisome iteration by some dozen voices on the trite theme of the instability of worldly fortune. Had the *Mirror* appeared originally in 1559, the date of the first extant edition, it would seem a paradoxical sequel to the *Miscellany*. But a statement of the editor, William Baldwin, shows (in conjunction with other evidence) that a folio was printed in 1554, containing Lydgate's *Falls of Princes*, and part of the *Mirror* which was planned as a supplement to it. But the *Mirror* in this form was prohibited by the Lord Chancellor, and only copies of the title-page and of a single leaf have been preserved. It is probable, however, that the suppressed edition contained all, or nearly all, the contents of the quarto of 1559, and that Part II., though not published till 1563, had been chiefly written before Elizabeth's accession.

The *Mirror* begins "where Lydgate left," and thus includes the lamentations of nearly thirty personages who had once been of high estate in England between the reigns of Richard II. and Richard III. They use Lydgate's seven-lined "rhyme-royal" stanza for the utterance of their woes, and the various "tragedies" are connected by interesting prose links, which in some cases give us the names of their authors. Among them, in addition to Baldwin, are George Ferrers, Thomas Churchyard, and Thomas Sackville. Churchyard's contribution, "Shore's Wife," owing no doubt in part to the notoriety of its theme, won the greatest favour at the time. Churchyard showed skill in making a sympathetic figure of the frail but warm-hearted royal paramour, who had used her power to benefit the needy, and who was deserted by all in the day of her downfall.[1]

[1] The only other woman included in the *Mirror*, in its original plan, was Eleanor Cobham, wife of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester. Their "tragedies" had been written by Ferrers before 1559, but for some unknown reason they were not published till 1578, in the sixth quarto. Meanwhile, in 1574, John Higgins had written "the falls" of a number of legendary British "princes," which was issued as *The First Part of the Mirror for Magistrates*. Further additions by Higgins and other editors were made at intervals up to 1610.

THOMAS SACKVILLE

The Induction.—But it is the two poems by Thomas Sackville (1536-1608) that have justified to posterity Sidney's verdict on *A Mirror for Magistrates* as "meetly furnished of beautiful parts." Baldwin relates that after the first edition had been suppressed, Sackville, who had apparently already written *The Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham*, "purposed to have gotten at my handes all the tragedies that were before the duke of *Buckingham's*, which hee would have preserved in one volume. And from that time backward, even to the time of William the Conquerour, he determined to continue and perfect all the story him selfe, in such order as Lydgate (following *Bochas*) had already used." Sackville did not carry out his design, but fortunately in anticipation of it he wrote the seventy-nine stanzas in rhyme-royal which were to serve as *Induction* or Prologue. The poet, walking abroad in a winter night, meets Sorrow, who guides him quaking to the underworld. Here, "within the porch and jaws of hell," he first beholds Revenge, Old Age, Death, War, and other grisly shapes. Then they are ferried by Charon across Acheron, and come

> to the horror and the hell,
> The large great kingdoms, and the dreadful reign
> Of *Pluto* in his throne where he did dwell,
> The wide waste places, and the hugy plain.

Here, among "a thousand sorts of sorrows," are "princes of renown . . . now laid full low," and from the throng first stalks forth the Duke of Buckingham to tell his doleful tale. In the *Complaint* the historical material proves somewhat intractable; but the reflective passages, and those in which Sackville illustrates his theme from classical examples, Alexander, Dionysius, and the rest, are finely wrought. Nor is there anything in the *Induction* to surpass the three beautiful stanzas beginning:

> Midnight was come, and every vital thing
> With sweet sound sleep their weary limbs did rest.

The exquisite peace of a wholly tranquil world passes into the very rhythm of the verse.

Sackville's Position as a Poet.—In his own province Sackville is worthy of all the praise that has been showered on him. He has vision, dignity, the true craftsman's instinct for modelling his figures, and, above all, an astonishing mastery of his well-worn instrument, the rhyme-royal stanza, which in the hands of his colleagues produced little better than "lean and flashy songs." Dante himself need not disdain to salute this grave young singer from a northern land who followed in his steps to the *Inferno*. For it is as a poetic descendant of Dante and Chaucer, born out of due time, that the Sackville of *A Mirror for Magistrates* should take rank, even if in the blank verse of the last two acts of *Gorboduc* he points the way to Kyd,

Marlowe, and Shakespeare. Thereafter, as Lord Buckhurst, and later Earl of Dorset, as ambassador, privy councillor, and statesman, he was claimed by the court and state affairs till his death in 1608. Spenser in 1590 might well lament the silence of his "learned Muse." What we have lost thereby none can tell. But as it is, Sackville is not in the direct line of poetic succession. Spenser's mediævalism, wherein he touches the writer of the *Induction*, is mainly on the surface, a matter of language and machinery; essentially he belongs to the Renaissance, and brings to fulfilment all that was heralded in the new orientation under Henry VIII.

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Chapter 4. EDMUND SPENSER

Earlier Life.—Most of our information about the life of Edmund Spenser is derived from his own writings. A reference in Sonnet LX. of his *Amoretti*, written in 1593, indicates that he was born forty-one years previously, *i.e.* in 1552. He was a Londoner by birth though not by descent. In his *Prothalamion* he speaks of

> mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
> That to me gave this lifes first native sourse,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> An house of auncient fame.

This "house" was that of the Spencers of Althorp, Northampton. Its head was Sir John Spencer, to three of whose daughters Spenser, as a kinsman, dedicated poems. His own branch of the family was connected with North-east Lancashire; but his father, John Spenser, had settled in London, probably in East Smithfield, near the Tower. His mother's Christian name was Elizabeth, and there were three children of the marriage.

Edmund Spenser.

Edmund, with a younger brother, was sent to the newly founded Merchant Taylors' School, of which Richard Mulcaster was headmaster. Here he was grounded in the "tongues," Greek, Latin, and French, and may have taken part in the dramatic performances which were a feature of Mulcaster's educational system. In 1569 Spenser proceeded as a sizar to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He took his B.A. in 1573, and his M.A. in 1576. The most powerful influence on him at Cambridge was Gabriel Harvey, a Fellow of Pembroke, and a noted humanist. In spite of Harvey's strain of pedantry and his aggressive Puritanism, his wide culture and enthusiasm for letters were an inspiration to his younger fellow-collegian.

On leaving Cambridge Spenser paid a visit to "the North Country," doubtless the Lancashire district, with which he had family ties. Here he fell in love with a maiden whose name he disguises under the anagram of "Rosalinde." She appreciated the intellectual gifts of her "Segnior Pegaso," but gave her heart

to a rival, and *The Shepheardes Calender* contains the poetic record of Spenser's hapless suit.

In or about 1578 he returned, on Harvey's pressure, to the South, and it was probably through his friend's introduction that the young Cambridge student became attached to the train of the Earl of Leicester and his nephew, Sir Philip Sidney. In a letter to Harvey, dated from Leicester House in the Strand on October 15, 1579, he alludes to his "late beeing with hir Maiestie," and to his familiar relations "with the twoo worthy Gentlemen, Master *Sidney* and Master *Dyer*." Under such powerful patronage he expected advancement at court, but by some indiscretion, perhaps personal and political allusions in the satire which a dozen years afterwards was printed as *Mother Hubberds Tale* in the volume of *Complaints*, he seems to have offended the powerful minister, Burghley.

Spenser in Ireland.—Hence when preferment came, in the summer of 1580, it was in the "questionable shape" of the private secretaryship to Lord Grey of Wilton, the newly appointed Lord-Deputy of Ireland. Thus by a singular whim of fortune Spenser, a son of London, with Lancastrian blood in his veins, became the first of the memorable line of Anglo-Irish poets and playwrights that stretches from him through Congreve, Sheridan, and Moore to W. B. Yeats and Bernard Shaw. But it is part of the age-long ironic tragedy of the relations between the two islands that Ireland was to Spenser merely a "salvage soil," peopled by barbarous aliens. The poet who was drawing inspiration from the high histories of Ulysses and Æneas, Arthur and Orlando, should have found delight in the heroic tales of Cuchulinn and the Red Branch. The brilliant metrist might have explored with a craftsman's interest the complicated rhyme-systems of Gaelic verse. But between Spenser and all this stood the barrier of an unknown tongue, and the no less fatal barrier of religious and political prejudice. Spenser was a convinced partisan, and later, in his prose *View of the Present State of Ireland*, an eloquent defender, of Lord Grey's sternly repressive policy, which after two years led to his recall. The secretary did not follow his master. By his appointment in 1581 as clerk of Decrees and Recognizances of the Dublin Court of Chancery he had become a permanent public servant of the Irish Government. Grants of land and houses on lease in the counties of Wexford and Kildare and in Dublin followed, and in 1589 Spenser was chosen to succeed Ludovic Bryskett as clerk of the council of Munster. The council was planting the southern province with English settlers, and Spenser's share of the spoil was the manor and castle of Kilcolman, an estate of about 3,000 acres, in county Cork, which was henceforth to be the poet's home.

His allusions, under the fanciful names of "Mole" and "Mulla," to the neighbouring hills and river, show that Spenser had an appreciative eye for the soft beauty of Munster scenery. But he was now doubly an exile. Dublin might not be London, but it was at any rate a centre where he could meet kindred spirits, as at that gathering at Bryskett's cottage immortalized by the host in his *Discourse of Civil Life*,

where Spenser declined a request to discourse on the benefits of moral philosophy, because he had already undertaken a work tending to the same effect, "which is in *heroical verse* under the title of a *Faerie Queene*." At Kilcolman Spenser, a lonely "undertaker" amidst a hostile population, must have been thrown chiefly on his own society. Here, in the autumn of 1589, another undertaker, Sir Walter Raleigh, temporarily "out of suits with fortune" at court, found him banished "into that waste where I was quite forgot." Posterity has curiously varied debts to Sir Walter, and not least for his swift recognition of Spenser's noble poetic achievement in the earlier books of *The Faerie Queene*, and his insistence that the poet should return with him to London bearing his precious manuscript. Early in 1590 it was published by William Ponsonby, with a dedication to the queen, and a series of commendatory sonnets to illustrious patrons. The success of the poem was immediate and resounding; but again Spenser was disappointed of his hopes of preferment at court, though he was awarded a pension of fifty pounds a year.

Later Life.—He returned to Kilcolman, probably in the latter part of 1591, disillusioned but not permanently embittered, to find consolation in the practice of his art, and later in the wooing of Elizabeth Boyle, which, after more than a twelvemonth of fluctuating hopes and fears, was crowned by his marriage on June 11, 1594. In the same year he resigned his clerkship to the council of Munster, and thus, freed from official duties, he was able in 1595 to pay another and longer visit to London. Early in 1596 the "Second Part of *The Faerie Queene*" (Books IV.–VI.) was published by Ponsonby, with a re-issue of Books I.–III.; and some minor poems followed in the same year. In one of these, the *Prothalamion*, he inserts a panegyric on the Earl of Essex, "great Englands glory and the worlds wide wonder," fresh from his triumph at Cadiz. But Essex could do no more for Spenser's advancement at court than Leicester or Raleigh, and once again the poet, after a "long fruitlesse stay," went back to Kilcolman, probably in 1597.

As before, he had consolations—the company of his "countrey lasse" and their children, the leisure to continue his half-finished masterpiece, and the prospect of becoming Sheriff of Cork, for which office he was recommended by the queen in September 1598. But in October Munster rose in rebellion; Kilcolman was burnt to the ground, and Spenser with his family had to flee to Cork. Thence he set forth for London in December, with dispatches for the President of Munster and a paper setting forth his own views on the situation. Shaken doubtless in health by the harsh experiences through which he had just gone, he died suddenly on January 16, 1599. As with so many of the great Elizabethans, his life ended tragically, but not in such abject want as tradition would have us believe. He was laid, through the generosity of Essex, in the most fitting of resting-places, near his master Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

Extant and Lost Works.—The following works of Spenser were published in his

lifetime: *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579); *The Faerie Queene*, Books I.–III. (1590); *Complaints, containing sundrie small Poemes of the Worlds Vanitie* (1591); *Dapnaïda, an Elegie* (1591); *Astrophel, a Pastorall Elegie* (1595); *Amoretti and Epithalamion* (1595); *The Faerie Queene*, Books IV.–VI., with a re-issue of Books I.–III. (1596); *Fowre Hymnes* (1596); *Prothalamion* (1596).

After his death, the fragment of Book VII. of *The Faerie Queene* appeared in the folio edition of the poem, 1609; the prose *View of the Present State of Ireland*, entered on the Stationers' Register in 1598, was not printed till 1633.

Other early works are mentioned by "E. K." in his epistle prefixed to *The Shepheardes Calender*, or in the correspondence between Harvey and Spenser in 1579–80. They include "his *Dreames*, his *Legendes*, his *Court of Cupide*," the *Dying Pelicane*, *Epithalamion Thamesis*, *Stemmata Dudleiana* (in Latin), and "nine English Commedies." Some of these may have furnished materials for Spenser's extant writings, but the comedies at any rate have left no trace, though Harvey rated them "for the finenesse of plausible Elocution or the rarenesse of Poetical Invention" nearer to Ariosto's comedies than *The Faerie Queene* to the *Orlando Furioso*. It is a tantalizing loss, but on the whole we are fortunate in having so large a proportion of Spenser's work. For it was evidently his inclination, strengthened by his Irish exile, to delay sending his manuscripts to the press.

Delay in the Publication of his Poems.—Between 1579 and 1590 no poem by him found its way into print, though as early as 1580 part of *The Faerie Queene* was submitted to Harvey for his judgment, and "some parcels" of it had been seen by members of the company at Bryskett's cottage. Had not Raleigh intervened, it might have been lost to the world. Such has been the fate of a number of poems and translations, chiefly of a religious nature, mentioned by Ponsonby when, encouraged by the success of *The Faerie Queene*, he published the volume of *Complaints* in 1591. This volume included work ranging over a number of years. The *Visions of Bellay* and the *Visions of Petrarch* were revised translations which had appeared anonymously in 1569 in a volume edited by a Flemish refugee, Van der Noodt. *The Ruines of Rome*, also translated from Du Bellay, and *The Visions of the Worldes Vanitie*, pitched in a like key, show the same early influence. *Mother Hubberds Tale* is described by Spenser himself as "long sithens composed in the raw conceipt of my youth," and *Virgils Gnat* as "long since dedicated" to Lord Leicester. On the other hand, he states that the panegyric on Sidney in *The Ruines of Time* was composed "sithens my late cumming into England," but the poem probably included older material, as in the Pageants at the close. And *The Teares of the Muses*, lamenting the total decay of the Arts, must date from a period considerably before the visit to London when he met the poets and dramatists eulogized in *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. This work, though dedicated to Raleigh on December 27, 1591, was not printed till 1595. Again, in dedicating, on December 1, 1596, his *Fowre Hymnes* to the Countesses of Cumberland and Warwick, he declares that the

two of " earthly or naturall love and beautie " were composed " in the greener times of my youth," and that " many copies thereof were formerly scattered abroad."

It results from all this that while we can survey Spenser's poetic achievement as a whole and estimate his place in Elizabethan literature, it is peculiarly difficult to trace stages in his development, or to identify many of his personal and political allusions. Thus of late even his *Amoretti*, supposed to contain an idealized record of his wooing of Elizabeth Boyle, has been ingeniously reinterpreted as in the main a courtly form of sonneteering to his favourite kinswoman, Lady Carey. There were things that Spenser, on public or private grounds, thought well to leave in a half-light, and he seems also, like Swift and Scott, to have liked mystification for its own sake.

" The Shepheardes Calender."—Thus it was with elaborate artifice that *The Shepheardes Calender* was presented to the world in 1579. The author, veiling himself under the modest title of " Immerito," stepped aside in favour of " E. K." (almost certainly his Pembroke contemporary, Edward Kirke), who introduced the poem in a long epistle to Harvey, and added to each of its twelve " Æglogues ' glosses which are silent or enigmatic on the points that really matter. A work of less genius than *The Shepheardes Calender* would have foundered under this dead-weight. But E. K.'s equivocal offices could not hide the fact that a " new poet " had arisen who could look " before and after," who could take traditional forms and motives, and give them fresh, radiant life. Into a framework of " twelve eclogues proportionable to the twelve months," suggested by the rustic almanacs used by the herdsmen of his own day, he loosely fitted themes rifled from the pastoral poetry of Greece and Rome, of Italy and France. From Theocritus comes the device of the singing match in the August eclogue ; from Bion the myth of Cupid, in March ; from Virgil, the panegyric, in April ; from Mantuan the handling in pastoral disguise of religious controversy, in May, July, and September ; from Clément Marot the dirge, in November, and the retrospect over the vanished out-of-door joys of spring and summer, in December. But all take a new colour and glow under Spenser's hand. And to add poignancy to the most consecrated of pastoral lays, the plaint of the love-lorn swain, there was the rankling wound in his own heart. " Ah, God, that love should brede both joy and payne ! " cries Colin in January, and his anguish swells to full pitch in June and December, and sobs in undertone in April and August.

Neither this romance nor the rustic framework gives unity to the poem. To borrow a phrase from E. K., it is a " gallimaufray or hodgepodge," where the *flora* and *fauna* of Sicily mingle with those of Kent, and a Cuddie and Diggon Davie rub shoulders with a Colin and Thenot. The language likewise is " compounded of many simples "—the standard English of the period, antiquated words and forms borrowed from Middle English writers, North Country and other dialect phrases, and neologisms of Spenser's own invention. And the versification ranges from the

accentual measure with four beats to ballad metre, and from five-foot stanzas of varied arrangement to the novel strophes of the song on "Eliza" in April and the dirge on "Dido" in November. Here the English lyric flowers into strange, exotic beauty; while in the noble October eclogue, where the war-trump of *The Faerie Queene* is heard from afar among the pipes of Arcady, the Chaucerian decasyllable comes again triumphantly into its own. It is as a metrist that the Spenser of the *Calender* is most akin to the "Tityrus" who (as he declares with patriotic economy of truth) "taught me homely, as I can, to make."

THE FAERIE
QVEENE.
Disposed into twelue bookes,
Fashioning
XII. Morall vertues.
LONDON
Printed for V William Ponsonbie.
1596.

Title-page of "The Faerie Queene."

Other Shorter Poems.—It is in *Mother Hubberds Tale* that we see far more clearly Spenser's discipleship to Chaucer. He here turns the old "beast-fable" of the Ape and the Fox to the purposes of political and social satire. Whatever exactly the political intent may have been, there is no mistaking the pungency and realism of the social sketches. The ape, masquerading as a wounded soldier, "with an old Scotch cap" on his head, and breeches "made after the new cut"; the simple husbandman who engages him as shepherd; the ignorant, lazy, "formall priest"; the posturing "magnifico" who is the counterfeit of the "brave courtier" —all might have ridden to Canterbury, though "the brave courtier" himself is a more highly idealized type than the parfit, gentle knight. The bare forthright diction and the strong, rapid swing of the decasyllabic couplet have the Chaucerian stamp.

It is simplicity of another kind that marks *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*. As Professor de Selincourt has said, "It is the triumph of the familiar style in which so few writers have excelled. To write thus is only possible to one who is artist and gentleman." This is particularly true of the passages that tell of his meeting and journey with Raleigh, and of the mingled glories and scandals of the court. But at the close his voice takes a higher range when, as priest of the God of Love, he rapturously expounds "the mysterie of his might." It is the same doctrine that is set forth with yet more impassioned ardour in the first two *Hymnes*. Their sublime interpretation of Love and Beauty needed no palinode. Their platonic idealism does not conflict with, but complements, the Christian mysticism of the two later

Hymnes. And both are blended with the more earthly glow of a bridegroom's ecstasy in the magnificent *Epithalamion* on the poet's marriage, in which Spenser's lyric art reaches consummate mastery.

"The Faerie Queene."—Probably to Spenser himself pastoral and satire, elegy and ode seemed merely "swallow-flights of song" compared with the heroical poem upon which he laboured so long yet left only half finished. *The Faerie Queene* differs from his other works in being professedly didactic; its purpose is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Yet even here the theme is "clowdily enwrapped in allegorical devises," though the disguise is now not that of pastoralism or of the fable, but of historical fiction. Prince Arthur (who was no merely legendary figure to Spenser) embodies "Magnificence," in which are contained the twelve so-called Aristotelian moral virtues. Of each of these a knight is designed as patron, while Arthur himself seeks union with his perfect counterpart, the Faerie Queene, who represents "Glory" in its highest form. Spenser's genius was weakest on the constructive side, and would probably in any event have fallen short of the original epic design. But the piecemeal way in which the poem was written and published was fatal to unity or balance.

In Books I. and II. the Red Cross Knight, or Holiness, and Sir Guyon, or Temperance, sustain their parts consistently enough, and Arthur, an epic "god from the machine," succours them at need. But in Book III. Britomart, the Maiden Knight of Chastity, has to divide the honours with Florimell and Belphœbe, who typify other aspects of the same virtue; while in Book IV. the titular representatives of Friendship, Cambell and Triamond, play minor parts. In Book V. Artegall, the Knight of Justice, resumes the rôle of protagonist, but in Book VI. Calidore, the "patron" of Courtesy, disappears for more than five of the twelve cantos.

Not only, however, was Spenser's "general" intention thus imperfectly carried out, but he complicated it with a "particular" intention. According to this, as he explained in his introductory letter to Raleigh, the Faerie Queene was Elizabeth, and her kingdom was England. Thus, the moral allegory is crossed by an historical one, in which Arthur is at times to be identified with Leicester, Artegall with Lord Grey of Wilton, and Duessa with Mary, Queen of Scots. And pending the appearance of the Faerie Queene in the (never-written) twelfth book, the poet pictures his sovereign in Belphœbe and Mercilla.

In truth Spenser's genius was too opulent, his imagination too fertile to move at ease within the limits of allegory. He had a vast framework to fill, and he crowded into it the most diverse materials. Reminiscences from the epics of antiquity, episodes borrowed and adapted from Ariosto and Tasso, machinery from the *Morte Darthur* and mediæval romance, comic incidents of his own devising, dramatic contemporary situations, like the trial of Mary at Fotheringay and Henry of Navarre's change of faith, his experiences as secretary and as "undertaker" in Ireland—all are drawn into the service.

The Spiritual Unity of the Poem.—Yet it is a profound mistake to look upon *The Faerie Queene* as a maze or as failing in its high purpose. It has an inner though not a structural unity. It is the epic of the spiritual life militant, ever armed and on the alert, battling with evil in its Protean variety of forms, unwearied in the quest for Honour:

> In woods, in waves, in warres she wonts to dwelle,
> And wil be found with perill and with paine.

But Spenser was too true a child of his age to divorce the Good from the Beautiful. There is a surface beauty that ensnares and betrays. It is part of the discipline of the complete man-at-arms to learn to tell the counterfeit fairness from the true; not to mistake the glamour of Acrasia's Bower for the fruitful loveliness of the garden of Adonis, or the baleful fire in Duessa's eyes for the heavenly radiance of Una's face. This "vertuous and gentle discipline" does not mean, as with Bunyan's pilgrim, the renunciation of the things of this world, but the unending and ennobling effort to transmute them to the highest use.

The Spenserian Stanza.—Fitly matching the rich complexity of the poem is the wonderful nine-lined stanza, rhyming *a b a b b c b c c*, and ending with an alexandrine, which is the crown of Spenser's metrical invention. As pliant as it is stately, the stanza answers every call that he makes upon it, for narrative or description, reflection or dialogue. Even when his vision is dimmed, or his imagination flags, the verse makes haunting melody as it undulates in "its long moon-silvered roll." *The Shepheardes Calender* had decided the future of the English lyric, but without *The Faerie Queene* Elizabethan literature would not have stood four-square, for it would have lacked a poetic masterpiece worthy to be set beside the dramas of Shakespeare, the prose of the Authorized Version, and the prophetic vision of the Baconian philosophy.

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Chapter 5. EARLY ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The Origins: The Morality, Chronicle play, and Interlude—John Heywood. Early Comedy: *Gammer Gurton's Nedle* and *Ralph Roister Doister*. Early Tragedy: *Gorboduc*, etc.—Gascoigne—the University Wits—Marlowe

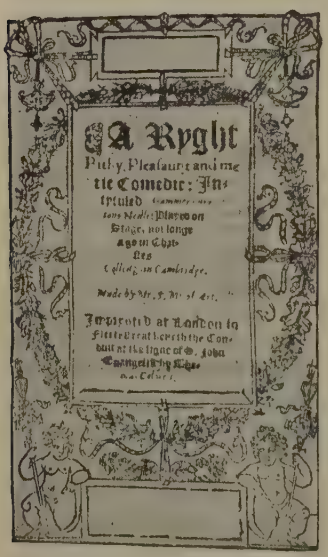
The Origins.—When Henry VIII. mounted the throne the Morality play still held the field of drama. Indeed, it lingered on until the days of Shakespeare, receiving for a time a new lease of life at the hands of rival theologians, who found it a convenient weapon for thrashing out the problems which the Reformation had raised. Even Foxe, the martyrologist, left a Latin religious drama, while the virulent Protestant bishop John Bale (1495–1563) wrote twenty-two plays, of which only five have survived, the most important being *King John*, an anti-papal Chronicle play and the earliest extant historical drama in the language.

The Interlude.—But the Renaissance spirit at the Tudor court demanded plays which would amuse rather than instruct. The result was the rise of the Interlude, a new type of comedy, lasting from one to two hours, farcical in character and generally dealing with a single incident or anecdote. It flourished during the first half of the 16th century, and bridges the gap between mediæval and Elizabethan drama, being itself derived partly from the comic elements of the morality and partly from the French *sottie* or farce. The most famous writer of interludes was John Heywood (1497–*c.* 1578), who, beginning life as one of Henry VIII.'s "singing-men," rose high in favour at court and married into the family of Sir Thomas More. Six of his plays are extant, the best known being the *Four PP*, an entertaining dialogue between a Pothecary, a Pardoner, a Palmer, and a Pedlar, in which the last named is appointed to decide which of the other three can tell the biggest lie.

The Professional Actor and the Theatre.—The interlude is interesting, not so much for its literary fruits, which were nothing remarkable, as for the indications which it gives of the tendencies of the English drama at this period. For its genesis was intimately associated with the rise of the professional actor in England. The printing-press had deprived the minstrel of his occupation. The case of Heywood, himself "a player of the virginals," shows us what happened to the whole class which he represented. They turned to the theatre as the only form of entertainment left to them, and in doing so they entirely altered the status and character of the art which they adopted. Actors' companies, under the patronage of noblemen, had become a recognized feature of London life as early as Henry VIII.'s time, and the exchequer accounts show us that quite a number existed at this period. With the rise of the professional actor we approach the beginning of the theatre as we know it to-day. It remained to establish permanent playhouses (*c.* 1576), and

to determine the form of the drama, with its division into acts and scenes and its distinction between comedy and tragedy. The latter was the work of the Renaissance and the revival of interest in classical literature, though the lesson in either respect was never fully learnt by Shakespeare.

Scholastic Drama.—Terence had been read throughout the Middle Ages; Petrarch had drawn attention to Seneca and Plautus. But only in the middle of the 15th century did men find out that these writers had intended their plays to be actually performed. The discovery led to an outburst of dramatic activity in the schools and universities of Europe during the 16th century. Teachers not only made their pupils perform the classical dramas, but set themselves to write Latin plays in imitation of them. Thus there was a large body of Latin drama produced at English seats of learning during the Tudor period which scholars are only now beginning to appraise at its proper value. Quite apart from this, the boy-players, more especially of the choir-schools—St. Paul's, the Chapel Royal, etc.—exerted a powerful influence upon the development of the vernacular drama. Heywood wrote his interludes for such "children," and they were the favourite performers at court, where they generally acted plays in the native tongue, right up to the time of Shakespeare.


A Ryght
Pithy, Pleasaunt and mer
rie Comedie: Intytuled
Gammer Gurton's Nedle: Played on
Stage, not longe
Ago in Chri
stes
Colledge in Cambridge.
Imprinted at London in
Fletestreat beneth the Con
duit at the signe of S. John
Evangelist by Iohn
Cawood Prin

Title-page of "Gammer Gurton's Needle."
(S. Kensington Museum.)

Early Comedy and Tragedy.—The vast bulk of these English plays of scholastic origin have been lost, but a few remain to give us a taste of their quality. About 1550, for example, two English comedies were produced, one at Christ's College, Cambridge, and the other at Eton or Winchester. The first, entitled *Gammer Gurton's Nedle*, by one W. S., was little more than a farcical interlude divided into acts and scenes. The other, *Ralph Roister Doister*, by Nicholas Udall, was a closer imitation of the comedies of Plautus. Neither is a great work of art, but both are of first-class historical importance, as the earliest extant regular comedies in the language. The earliest extant regular English tragedy was likewise the work of scholars, this time the lawyers of the Inner Temple; for on January 18, 1562, these gentlemen performed before Queen Elizabeth a Senecan play called *Gorboduc*, by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. Following their classical model, the authors, one of whom was a great poet, strictly observed the "unities" of time and place, and saw to it that no action of any kind should appear upon the stage. The drama

therefore wearies the modern reader like some interminable conversation. But it secured Sir Philip Sidney's enthusiastic admiration, and is remarkable, moreover, as the first play, as far as we know, written in blank verse, the native tongue of the Elizabethan theatre. It would, however, be a mistake to regard these dramas as necessarily representative of the output of the period. As *The Supposes* (1566), a translation from Ariosto by George Gascoigne, and the *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) of George Whetstone show us, Italian influence, which contributed so largely to the work of Shakespeare, was making itself felt long before his time, while the records of the Revels Office contain the names of hundreds of lost plays which prepared the way for the great florescence at the end of the 16th century. Meanwhile the popular theatre was making its way in the teeth of a puritan Lord Mayor and Corporation, and finally, about 1576, sealed its triumph by the erection of the first permanent English playhouse just beyond the limits of the hostile city's authority. In 1580 everything was ready for the advent of a great dramatist.

The University Wits.—The greatest did not arrive until some ten years later, but the intervening decade belongs to a group of seven young writers, generally called the "University Wits," who, bred in the traditions of the classical drama, went down to the popular stage and delivered it

> From jigging veins of riming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in play,

filling the Elizabethan theatre with "high astounding terms," with charming romances, and with exquisite lyrics. Of these remarkable men, who by no means confined their attention to the drama, the earliest to enter the field was John Lyly. He stands somewhat apart from his fellows, inasmuch as he wrote almost wholly for the court and for the boys' companies rather than for the popular stage. He was, in fact, the last and perhaps the best of a long line of court dramatists whose task of entertaining the queen was presently to be committed to the "public players." Lyly's eight plays, to which Shakespeare owed a considerable debt, were court allegories. Their themes were derived generally from classical mythology, and nearly all were in prose, steeped in the euphuistic style that Lyly himself had popularized in his novel *Euphues*. Lyly was the wittiest of the "University Wits," and his best plays, such as *Endymion* and *Campaspe*, still glow with a certain faint fairy moonlight. George Peele, another of this group, is remembered chiefly for his *Arraignment of Paris* and *David and Bethsabe*, two unequal plays containing much sweet flowing verse. Thomas Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*, one of the most popular dramas of the age, established a type aptly described as "the tragedy of blood," to which *Titus Andronicus* belongs, while *Hamlet* itself was based upon an earlier horror-play of the same genre, said to have been written by Kyd. Thomas Lodge has bequeathed us turgid classical dramas like *The Wounds of Civil War*, and was moreover a collaborator with Robert Greene, a man of much greater parts, who

squandered his genius in drink and much second-rate writing. Greene was a prolific playwright, and his best dramas belong to the same species which Shakespeare brought to perfection in *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*—namely, the dramatized pastoral romance. Another of Greene's collaborators was Thomas Nash, though his extant dramatic work is slight.

Christopher Marlowe. — Greatest of all was Christopher Marlowe (1564–93). Youngest but one of the seven, being born in the same year as Shakespeare, this "marvellous boy," before his untimely death at the age of twenty-nine, had founded English romantic tragedy, had written one of the greatest poetical dramas in our language, and had converted the stiff mechanical blank verse of *Gorboduc* into a vital form which Shakespeare in his turn could make fit for the lips of his greatest creations. But he was far more than a pioneer. The fame of his contemporaries is the light which they derive from their proximity to Shakespeare; Marlowe shines for us across the centuries in the blaze of his own genius. No one but Milton could bend the bow of "grand style" as he bent it, or catch the spirit of Prometheus as he caught it, while his poem *Hero and Leander* proves him a son also of the gentler muse of sweet sensuousness to whom Spenser devoted the service of a lifetime. His dramas show only moderate constructive ability or power of characterization, but they carry the reader away by the sheer force and beauty of their language, and by the titanic visions which they call up in the mind. Tamburlaine, his earliest and crudest creation, comes upon the stage driving a team of kings before his chariot; Barabas, in *The Jew of Malta*, rules the world by the power of gold; Faustus sells his soul for a magician's wand. Each is inspired by a lust of power, and the tragedy always pursues the same course—triumph followed by a mighty fall. From the technical point of view, Marlowe's best work is *Edward II.*, but it cannot compare in psychological interest or poetic grandeur with *Doctor Faustus*, which became the admired model of the finest philosophical play of modern times, Goethe's *Faust*. For this great symbolic tragedy deals with a theme which was part not only of the author's inner experience but of the very stuff which nourished the Renaissance spirit. The pride of intellect by which both the Faustus of Marlowe and the Lucifer of Milton fell, was the subtlest and most dangerous temptation of the age. After wandering for centuries through the mists of ignorance, man found himself once more before the tree of knowledge. There, within his reach, burned like a thousand lamps the coveted fruit of his desire; but there, too, coiled about the roots, lay the old serpent, still unconquered, still thirsting for his soul's blood. Like his great hero, Marlowe also tasted the forbidden fruit and came to a miserable and sordid end, not indeed torn asunder by devils, but stabbed in a low tavern in a dispute over some light o' love, "the manner of his death being so terrible," writes a contemporary Puritan, "that it was not only a manifest sign of God's judgment, but also an horrible and fearful terror to all that beheld him."

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Chapter 6. THE LANGUAGE—EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

Modern English may be said to have begun with the decay of the inflectional system and the adoption of a standard usage as completed in the 15th century. Since 1500 many important changes have occurred in the received pronunciation, but the appearance and structure of the language have altered little, and the spelling, although it has undergone considerable normalization since Caxton, still remains essentially based on his usage, and renders Modern English vowels by their Middle English equivalents without regard to the phonetic changes which have affected almost every vowel since 1400.

The Literary Usage.—Sixteenth-century critical writing was largely directed towards the refinement and improvement of English as a literary medium, a movement parallel to that which took place in all Western Europe at the time of the Renaissance. Caxton had already attacked the question of a literary usage:

> *Preface to the Eneydos* (1490): "And when I sawe the fayr and straunge termes therin I doubted that it sholde not please some gentylmen whiche late blamed me, sayeng that in my translacyons I had ouer curyous termes whiche coude not be vnderstonde of comyn peple, and desired me to vse olde and homly termes, . . . and fayn wolde I satisfye euery man, and so to doo, toke an olde boke and redde therin, and certaynly the englysshe was so rude and brood that I coude not wele vnderstande it. . . . And thus bytwene playn, rude and curious I stande abasshed, but in my judgemente the comyn termes that be dayli used ben lyghter to be understonde than the olde and awncyent englysshe."

The use of "everyday language" in literature was advocated by the 16th-century purists, Ascham, Wilson, Gascoigne, Puttenham, and others, who opposed both the revival of archaic and obsolescent words favoured by some translators (Phaer, Turberville) and later notably by Spenser,[1] and the "improvement" of English by the use of inkhorn terms or the importation of foreign words.

> Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorike* (1553): "Some seek so far for outlandish English that they forget altogether their mother's language . . . they will powder their talk with over-sea language. He that cometh lately out of France, will talk French English, and never blush at the matter. Another chops in with English Italianated. . . . The unlearned or foolish fantastical, that smells but of learning . . . will so Latin their tongues that the simple cannot but wonder at their talk." (Book iii.)
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> Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie* (1589): "We finde in our English writers many wordes and speaches amendable, and ye shall see in some many inkhorne termes so ill affected brought in by men of learning as preachers and schoolemasters: and many straunge termes of other languages by Secretaries and Marchaunts and travailours, and many darke wordes and not usuall nor wel sounding, though they be dayly spoken in Court." He would admit, however, some words, "scholasticall termes in deede and yet very proper," and others which cannot be spared, viz., *penetrate, penetrable, indignitie.* (Ch. iv. Of Language.)

[1] *Cf.* E. K.'s defence of "olde and obsolete wordes . . . that they bring great grace, and as one would say auctoritie to the verse" (Epistle Dedicatory of *The Shepheardes Calender*).

Elyot, Nash, Pettie, and others defended the enrichment of the language by the changing of its "single money of monosyllables, these worthless shreds of small English, four into one, according to the Greek, French, Spanish, Italian," [1] while Wolsey and other learned writers carried the use of inkhorn terms to excess.

Cf. Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1576), Book viii., p. 964, where a dispatch of Wolsey's is quoted as an example of the "glorious stile of this vayneglorious Cardinall," containing such words as *jacture, pollicitation, demore, impesse, trutinate*, etc.

Latin still continued in use, but the number of Latin works declined under the impulse given to the vernacular by Elyot, Cheke, Ascham, and others. In England, as in Scotland, the Reformation contributed to the triumph of the vernacular, and Tyndale's *New Testament* of 1525 marks an epoch. *Dialect* was occasionally employed for literary purposes, as in *King Lear* and *The Shepheardes Calender*, but from the middle of the 15th century it ceased to exercise any strong influence on the standard usage.

The Spoken Usage.—The first phonetic treatises and grammars [2] relating to English date from the 16th century, and throw light upon the spoken usage of the day, reflecting in some cases the conservative pronunciation, and in others the progressive one. Thus Hart's *Orthographie* (1569) represents a progressive pronunciation criticized by Gill (*Logonomia*, 1621) as vulgar. The evidence of the amateur phonetic spelling used in private papers and diaries shows that the spoken usage was often far in advance of that represented as the best by the grammarians, while rhymes, which are often traditional and conservative, also point to a varying usage. A phonetic transcript in Welsh orthography of a *Hymn to the Virgin* (*c.* 1500) represents close *ē* and *ō* by *ī* and *ū* (*kwīn, gūd*), and shows that M.E. *ī* and *ū* were already diphthongic (written *ei, ow, cf.* modern [*ai*] [*au*]. In the more vulgar usage *ā* was already pronounced as open *ē* [æ], and *ă* as in *hat, cf.* the rhymes *scratch : wretch, back : neck* in Shakespeare. The pronunciation of *er* as *ar* became fashionable, and seems to have extended far beyond the present usage.[3]

Shakespeare's rhymes *can : swan, matter : water* are conservative beside the spellings *woose* (=was), *wosshe* (=wash), where *a* is already rounded after *w*. The rhyme *Rome : doom*, and the pun "Now is it *Rome* indeed and *room* enough" (*Julius Cæsar*, I. ii., 156), show that *Rome* was pronounced *Rūm*. The puns on *reasons* and *raisins* (rēznz), or on *here apparent* and *heir apparent* (hēr), in *Henry IV.*, Part I., II. iv., 264, and I. ii. 65 show that the diphthong *ai* was approximating to *ē, cf.* Holofernes on *neighbour*, infra, and Dr. Gill's complaint that *maid* is pronounced *meed* in 1621. M.E. *ai* and *a* had already fallen together as [æ], later [*e*], cf. *maid, made.*

Spelling.—The spellings *ea, oa* for open *ē, ō*, to distinguish from the close sounds written *ee, ie*, and *oo*, became common from Tyndale on, and the modern usage in this respect was becoming standardized by 1600. Some advance was made in the

[1] Nash, Preface to *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem.*

[2] For a list of these see Ellis, *Early Eng. Pronunc.*, or Horn, *Hist. neueng. Grammatik.*

[3] The present distribution of *er-, ar-* pronunciations [*ɛ̄, ă*] appears to date from the 18th century. *Cf* Wyld, *History of Modern Colloquial English*, p. 212 *ff.*

normalization of spelling, though this was still far from fixed and depended on the caprice of individual printers or writers. Attempts to introduce *phonetic spelling* towards the end of the century (Bullokar, Mulcaster) were unsuccessful. *Learned spellings* were common in the 16th and 17th centuries, but Holofernes' complaint of "the rackers of orthography" in *Love's Labour's Lost* show that such spellings did not seriously affect the pronunciation:

> I abhor such rackers of orthography, as to speak *dout*, fine, when he should say *doubt*; *det*, when he should pronounce *debt*. . . . This is *abhominable*—which he would call *abbominable*. (Act V., Sc. I.)

These spellings sometimes throw light on the pronunciation. Thus *delight*, *despight* (M.E. *delite*, *despite*) show that *gh* was already silent, *cf.* Holofernes (*ibid.*) "*neighbour* vocatur *nebour*; *neigh* abbreviated *ne*."

Syntax.—The loss of inflection was responsible for various syntactical changes in early Modern English. The substitution of nominative for dative in old impersonal constructions was now extended to pronouns, *cf.* Shakespeare's "I am sorrow for it" beside Chaucer's "wo was his coke," and modern "I like," "I am loath," for "it likes me," "me is loath," etc. The loss of the old genitive plural was responsible for constructions like "these kind of knaves" (*King Lear*, II. II. 107). *You* for *ye* as nominative became common towards 1600, and *who* as relative rather later, though found in the 16th century. The modern "it is me" is used as a vulgarism in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (II. III. 25).

Vocabulary.—The vocabulary was enriched (i) by new terms of travel and discovery, West Indian, Spanish, and Dutch; (ii) by the fashion for the importation of French and Italian words; (iii) by learned inkhorn terms; (iv) by the revival of obsolete or dialectal words; and although many of the new words did not survive the fashion of the age, the permanent additions were considerable.

Beginnings of Linguistic Study.—The phonetic treatises in 16th-century dictionaries (French, Welsh, Italian, and Spanish) indicate a new interest in linguistic study, which was extended to the older periods of English. The suppression of the monasteries had made old MSS. accessible to collectors, among whom were Leland, the King's antiquary, and Sir Thomas Bodley and Robert Cotton, founders of the Bodleian and Cotton Collections. Among the first Anglo-Saxon scholars were Archbishop Parker, Joscelin, and Nowell, of whom the last planned an Old English dictionary.

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SECTION III
THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

ENGLAND AT THE ACCESSION OF ELIZABETH (1558)

The first half of the 16th century had been an epoch of confusion and distraction, the result partly of the arbitrary policy of Henry VIII., and partly of the bitter religious discords which our Protestant Reformation brought in its train. No monarch has ever entered upon her reign under more unfavourable conditions than Elizabeth had to face in 1558. The political credit of the country was at its lowest; in the economic sphere the uncertainty that followed the upheaval of the monasteries was at its deepest; and the embers of religious persecution smouldered sullenly among the people. The loss of Calais was the final blow in the dismal strife; failure was written over all our undertakings. But the new queen, fortunately, proved equal to her position. With wonderful tact and patience, with a remarkable political insight and a clear view of the nation's needs, with the cunning of a born statesman, and a patriotism which her vanity and irresponsibility in petty personal matters did not conceal, Elizabeth changed the face of the country. The England of 1580 was a new England—proud, exultant, successful, able to hold up its head in Europe, a source of very great misgiving to Philip II. and the Popes. Her citizens, and her sailors especially, were everywhere famous. With the defeat of the Armada the climax was reached. She was again a nation ready and tuned for a great literature: Spenser, Shakespeare, Bacon, and many lesser men arose, and gave immortal expression to the new national self-consciousness.

Economic and Social Conditions.—Nor was this feeling merely a sentiment: it had its solid material side. Commerce and trade followed in the tracks of the great sailors; wealth accumulated, and a widespread prosperity added to the comfort of all classes. This is evident from the improvements in apparel and in the homes which took place, as much as in the splendour that was maintained at court and in the great houses. The London merchant, the craftsman, and the squire all enjoyed the new sense of security and comfort; they had leisure and the means to enjoy it. The effect of this on literature was to create a wider public for the dramas, poems, and novels, which answered the demand abundantly. Men like Greene and Ben Jonson lived by their pens. The theatre, in spite of the opposition of the

serious Puritans of the city, throve and grew more respectable. Great noblemen and officials, like Leicester and the Lord Chamberlain, kept their companies of actors; and new theatres at Blackfriars and Shoreditch, and especially the Globe, gave opportunities to men who had any talent for drama, whatever their origin. All classes enjoyed plays, and the fortune made by Shakespeare was only one of the fruits of this general prosperity. That such plays as *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merchant of Venice* could please all classes is the best comment that could be passed upon the prevailing atmosphere. What we wish to emphasize here is the aptness of a contented but very virile people for whatever literature had to provide for them.

Queen Elizabeth dressed for the Thanksgiving after the Defeat of the Armada.

Influence of the Renaissance on Culture; Classical and Italian Influences.—Material prosperity, however, would have been worse than useless if there had not been at work in the best minds the spirit of culture which was the fruit of the Renaissance, and which first showed its full glory in the reign of Elizabeth. The effect of the impulse given by such pioneers of scholarship as Colet, Erasmus, and More was seen in the spread of education, and in the interest in proper methods of teaching revealed by such a book as *The Scholemaster* of Roger Ascham. A thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek could be obtained at the universities, and opportunities were made by which promising pupils of all classes could avail themselves of the new studies. The Latin of the Renaissance was a very different matter from the Latin of the Middle Ages. The best authors—notably Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero—were studied in their best works: Ovid in particular was a favourite poet among Elizabethans—even among non-university men like Shakespeare; while Ben Jonson, who spent at the best a very short time at Cambridge, knew his Horace and Tacitus, as well as authors of lesser standing. Greek was not so familiar, except to a comparative few; but its influence was immense. It is well that the spirit of Greek

was all-powerful, for in the humanity of Elizabethan culture it managed very completely to overwhelm the pedantries of the Harveys and their like, who would have enslaved English verse in the unsuitable metres of the Latin poets. It was not Seneca or Plautus who gave the tone and form to English drama, but Shakespeare and Marlowe, who breathed a broader and more humane air. Meanwhile scholars were busy on translations of the classics; books like Golding's Ovid (*Metamorphoses*), North's Plutarch, and Chapman's Homer placed the ancient masterpieces in the hands of those who had "small Latin and less Greek." Nor must we forget that we owed much during this period to the examples of Italy and France. In scholarship, in poetry, in romance, in pastoral, Italy led Europe during the Renaissance period: we looked to Italy for pioneers in literary criticism, to

A Prospect of London in the Days of Shakespeare.

Petrarch for the sonnet, to Ariosto for romantic epic, to Sannazaro for an *Arcadia*, to Bandello and Cinthio for many novels and dramatic plots. In France we find the Pleiad showing an example of cultured poetry, and Montaigne leading the way for Bacon. And mention of Bacon reminds us that in the more august realm of philosophy, Elizabethan England felt the impulse towards free and liberal learning; the advancement of science is reflected in Gilbert's work on magnetism and in Harvey's discovery of the true course of the circulation of the blood.

The Renaissance and English Literature.—The many-sided intellectual adventurousness of the Renaissance was, in fact, fully reflected in our own literature. Nor were we immune from all its excesses and freakishness. There were books, like Lyly's *Euphues*, which became a fashionable vogue and made a tedious display of their learning, in recondite allusions and fantastic affectations; and most of the

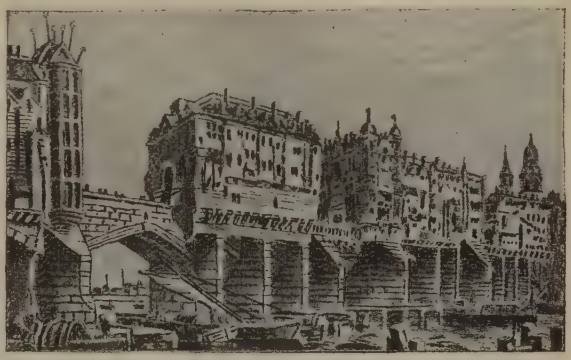
poems of the time are honeycombed with classical references. By the side of this we have the bold speculations of Marlowe, defiant excursions across the usual bounds of the imagination; and later, the frank animalism of those later dramatists to whom liberty meant unshackled licence. This was held in check by the steady growth, even during Elizabeth's reign, of that Puritanism which ultimately killed the drama for a time. The most typically Elizabethan writers, like Spenser, Sidney, and Lyly, had in them indeed the essential seriousness of the Puritan, and insisted upon the moral purpose of their writings. In some degree Ben Jonson carried their seriousness of motive over into the next reign; but it was in vain. The splendour had faded. Neither the court nor the public could be moved again by the ideals which inspired the exultant hour of Elizabethan literature. The drama declined into melodramatic horrors, frank indecency, grossly unnatural plots—expiring in the respectable Shirley after the hectic shows of Fletcher, Middleton, Webster, and Ford. It is not given to any literature or to any people to maintain for long the level of a Spenser or a Shakespeare, or even of a Ben Jonson.

Influence of a Reinvigorated National Life.—The excrescences which flourished on Elizabethan literature—artificial fashions like the Euphues craze, the Arcadian mirage, the sonnet sequences, and so forth—are but the signs of exuberant life. We are in the age of Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins: men who, by methods which were, to say the least, rough and ready, opened many of the unimagined wonders of the world to the eyes of their countrymen. That Englishmen were deeply stirred by their doings and discoveries is evident from such travel-books as Hakluyt's *Voyages*, but far more from the references in Shakespeare and many others, which show how strong was the impression made. We may read of these in *Othello* and *The Tempest*, for example; still more in the general spirit of such works as *Tamburlaine* or *The Winter's Tale*. The world had become a bigger place, unimaginably richer. The riotous and varied fancy of much Elizabethan writing was the direct result of the revelations of Drake and his comrades.

At the centre of this outburst of national activity, the focus of its patriotism, the Gloriana of its loftiest vision, the demi-goddess of its self-confident faith, was the queen herself. She shared in the poetic as well as in the political triumphs of her reign. At her court such men were welcome as Sidney and Spenser, as well as Leicester. She was fond of display, fond of compliments; and she obtained both in abundance from her men of letters. She was vain and capricious, but she could appreciate literary distinction, and was herself no mean scholar. It is sometimes difficult to understand how she could have won the lavish adoration of a Spenser or a Ben Jonson; but the fact remains that she did so, and that at the proudest moment in English history. The spirit that led Drake to rob and sink a Spanish ship with the cry "For God and Queen" on his lips was that which animated the poets in their eulogies. The literature of her reign is in the same sense religious and patriotic; loyalty is an article of unquestioned faith;

and the queen, as head of the Church, was appropriately treated with a respect that was nearly worship.

It was impossible, with the same sincerity, to treat James I. in that spirit. Although he had some pretensions to learning, he was mean and weak in his statecraft as he was pedantic and narrow-minded in his literary interests. After the death of Cecil, in 1612, the last link with Elizabethan policy was broken. Sir Walter Raleigh was in prison, and James was moving towards that pusillanimous friendship for Spain which cost Raleigh his life. The tone of the court deteriorated. Great poetry ceased to come forth, the drama reflected the corrupt morals of an uncritical court which could not dine on any fare that was not highly seasoned. Instead of unity there was now division in the nation. The growth of Puritan influence was set off by an equally serious drift into a more Catholic point of view, which became emphatic under Charles I. Between the two the average man fell into a slough, which is reflected in the tone of our later drama. And thus the Elizabethan literature slowly fades into the shadow of a great national conflict.



London Bridge in the Year 1600.

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Chapter 2. THE DRAMA

THE STAGE AND THE PLAYWRIGHT

The development of the drama as a literary product, which has been traced as far as Marlowe and was to culminate during the last years of Elizabeth in the art of Shakespeare, carried with it a corresponding evolution in the methods of presenting plays to the public. The mystery plays were performed by men of any and every class—amateurs, in our modern phrase; and their stage was merely a movable "pageant": there were no professional actors and no fixed place for the entertainment. But with the development of the more elaborate moralities and interludes, the position of playwright and actor alike became more definite. The playing of interludes became a kind of profession; but for a very long time the player himself was held in disrepute. The office of Master of the Revels, of which we first hear in 1546, kept the bridle on court performances, no doubt; but right on into the middle of Elizabeth's reign the rank and file of professional players were socially branded and declared by statute to be rogues and vagabonds, liable to arrest unless they could produce a licence signed by two justices. We can picture these strolling players, tramping from place to place and combining the performance of interludes and "vain plays" with jugglings, pipings, and other mountebank tricks for the amusement of illiterate audiences up and down the land: that riots and disturbances, and all manner of iniquities often followed their shows is likely enough; and the Elizabethan dramatist had the prejudice thus created to contend against, and to overcome if he could. The growth of Puritanism, with its severe moral sense, made another obstacle for him which he has hardly yet surmounted. It was in 1577 that one John Northbrooke linked "vain plays and interludes" with dicing and dancing as objects of biting reproof; and in 1579 Stephen Gosson wrote his *Schoole of Abuse*, a "pleasant invective against poets, pipers, players,

The Swan Theatre in 1614.

jesters, and suchlike caterpillars of a commonwealth," a tract which drew from Sir Philip Sidney his *Apologie for Poetrie*, in which he took care not to defend contemporary plays, but claimed that a properly constructed play gave as wide a scope for moral instruction as any other form of poetry. The Gosson-Sidney controversy shows well enough that play-writing—and along with it play-acting—was becoming the concern of the best literary and social circles.

At the same time it was neither the scholar nor the Puritan who was to have his way. The chief actors of the day were to be, like Shakespeare, men of the middle class; it was not *Gorboduc*, but *Tamburlaine*, that marked the future direction of English drama. Many players remained rogues and vagabonds; yet it was from the ranks of such men that the Elizabethan theatre drew its exponents. Even Gosson confessed, in 1579, that there were good men and worthy citizens among the players: by 1600 such a statement would have been a truism, although the attacks on the stage continued, until their climax in Prynne's *Histriomastix* (1633).

The Licensed Companies.—The chief element in the actor's upward progress was the prestige afforded to him by the patronage of the court, and of great men like Leicester and Howard of Effingham. The necessity for the regulation of stage performances was admitted by the queen and her advisers; but evidently the drama was a desirable form of amusement, and licences were granted to several noblemen to maintain their own companies of players. The earliest of these was Leicester's company, licensed in 1574; after 1588, when Leicester died, the company was transferred to Lord Strange, and later to the Lord Chamberlain. After the accession of James I., this famous company, of which Shakespeare was a member, became known as "the King's Men." Its leading members were Richard Burbage, who obtained his repute in tragedy, and William Kempe, an equally successful comedian. Other companies licensed at various times were the Lord Admiral's, Lord Pembroke's, and Lord Worcester's. In addition to these there were the companies of children, the "little eyases" of *Hamlet*, drawn from the choristers of the Royal Chapel and St. Paul's. These boys were chiefly cast for the parts of women; but they were popular in other rôles, and Shakespeare's sharp reference to them[1] demonstrates their wider popularity.

The Actor's Calling.—Frequent allusions in Shakespeare and Ben Jonson throw light on the conditions of the actor's calling. Shakespeare himself was an actor, though apparently not a great one: the man to whom the Ghost's part in *Hamlet* is assigned is not usually a first-magnitude star. Few of his plays, however, are without evidence of his practical knowledge of the stage; in their construction, in their careful mindfulness of stage possibilities, in the frequent scattered passages in which the stage is referred to, it is clear that we have an author who thinks in terms of the theatre and is saturated with its details. He is keenly aware of the actor's defects and limitations. "The best in this kind are but shadows:" Theseus's words seem to carry the tolerant pessimism of one who has found the stage inherently

[1] *Hamlet*, Act II., sc. ii.

incompetent to body forth his ideas; and in *Henry V.* we have the famous prologue wherein he apologizes for the feebleness of the means with which he sought to accomplish such great deeds. "Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France?" Yet on the other hand life itself is conceived as a stage in the well-known passage in *As You Like It;* and to Macbeth life is but "a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage." These are the words of one who had taken the art of acting seriously. The actor has become the interpreter of ideas, an artist appealing to the imagination of the audience. He has risen along with the playwright. Hamlet's instructions to his players in the third act of *Hamlet* show that there was a rational ideal of acting in the poet's mind, though he found many actors who fell short of it. To hold the mirror up to nature, and not to outdo moderation; to represent life as it is, and not tricked out to catch a laugh from the groundlings; to speak with smoothness and naturalness, and not to mouth it like a town-crier, or tear a passion to tatters in volleys of shrieking noise: speech, manner, and gesture receive his attention in this famous scene, which cannot be too carefully studied if we would appreciate how far the actor's art had advanced during the reign of Elizabeth. "Ercles' vein" and "King Cambises' vein" belong to a cruder epoch; old Hieronimo of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* has become the butt and not the hero of the stage. The ears of the groundlings had to be tickled, even by Shakespeare; but there must have been actors who came near to the spirit of Hamlet's advice. Bully Bottom and Peter Quince doubtless had many prototypes; but Burbage, Alleyn, and Kempe must have been actors in the modern sense, capable of making a play's reputation and of giving it a significance of their own.

The Theatres.—In the early days of their existence the Earl of Leicester's men performed their comedies, tragedies, and interludes in the open yards of some of the inns in the City; but the City Council, then and later, were hostile to these performances from their rowdy accompaniments. The City had its own rights, and guarded them jealously even against the Lord Chamberlain himself; it expelled the players from its precincts; and thus it came about that the first theatre, built for the particular purpose of exhibiting stage plays, was erected outside its borders in Shoreditch. This was done in 1576 by James Burbage, the father of the great actor. Burbage's Theatre was little more than a glorified inn-yard, but was circular in form, because he wanted it to be adapted to the purposes of a bear-garden and cockpit, as well as to that of theatrical performance. It was open to the sky, and the spectators stood in the pit to witness the play, just as they had done in the inn-yards. There was no gallery, though there may have been private boxes for wealthy patrons. The movable stage was rectangular and projected towards the centre of the building; the audience could stand on three sides of it, and the conveniences for the actors were of the crudest description. A separate tiring-house was possibly curtained off behind

the stage, but no more. In such humble circumstances were the plays of Marlowe and Greene first presented to an Elizabethan audience. Still, the wooden building represented a great advance, and its ornamental pretensions attracted the censure of Puritan preachers and of Stephen Gosson. It does not seem to have been an entirely successful speculation; after the death of Burbage it was pulled down, and its timber used in the construction of the more famous Globe. The Curtain Playhouse, which was built shortly after Burbage's Theatre and also in Shoreditch, was more fortunate, and lasted almost to the bad days when the theatres were closed altogether.

A valuable document in connection with the theatrical history of the time has been preserved. This is the diary or record of the commercial transactions of Philip Henslowe, whose relations with theatres, actors, and play productions are treated with a business-like brevity which enables us to gain something more than a glimpse of the stage customs of the time. Henslowe would seem to have been a business rival of Burbage, and in 1587 he erected a new theatre on the Bankside, south of the Thames and just outside the City, known as the Rose, the contract for the building of which still exists. It cost £816, which suggests that it was a substantial edifice; but it did not continue apparently later than 1603. Another of Henslowe's theatres was the Fortune, erected in Cripplegate in 1600. The contract between Henslowe and Alleyn on the one side and the builder on the other is extant, and gives us valuable information about the size and general arrangement of the building. It was a rectangular three-story structure, 80 feet by 55; and the stage measured 27 feet by 43. It was burnt down in 1621. A further enterprise of Henslowe's was the transformation of a bear-garden on the Bankside into the Hope Theatre (1613), in which Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* was first produced in 1614.

The Globe Theatre at Southwark.
(From a drawing in the British Museum.)

We have still to mention the two theatres with which Shakespeare was more especially concerned. The theatre at Blackfriars began as a private playhouse in 1576. The regulations of the City Corporation did not exclude plays and players performing before a private audience, where no charge was taken from those present. Richard Farrant, the Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, was himself a minor playwright and adapted a portion of the priory of Blackfriars to the purposes

of dramatic performance under the City's regulations. The performances were given by the royal choir boys under the pretence of training. The auditorium must have been small, and the prices of admission correspondingly high. The audience would therefore have been select, and such as would ask for a refined performance. Under such conditions as these, we may suppose that the comedies of Lyly were acted before the public. The pert verbal wit of those comedies could be taught to trip easily from the tongues of the boy actors at the private theatres.

Farrant's "rooms" fell into disuse shortly after his death in 1580; but in 1596 James Burbage took them with the idea of converting them into a public theatre. He died in 1597, and his son Richard, continuing his work, was forced to desist from the project and to re-establish the building as a private theatre. It was, however, a public theatre in all but name; on completion of the building it was let to two managers, one of whom was the new Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal; for eleven years, the "aiery of children" mentioned in *Hamlet* performed there and were "most tyrannically clapped for't." They were suppressed in 1608, and it was then that Shakespeare, with six other actors, took a lease of it from Burbage. Shakespeare's share in this most important of Jacobean theatres was one-seventh; he held this when he died, and it was doubtless a valuable property.

The Globe.—The Globe Theatre was erected in 1598 in the parish of St. Mary Overy, Southwark, out of the materials supplied by the destruction of Burbage's Theatre in Shoreditch. The sign of the theatre was a figure of Hercules bearing a globe, with the motto (in Latin)—"All the world is a stage." Shakespeare himself had, it would appear, a tenth share in it, and many of his plays are known to have been produced there. In the prologue to *Henry V.* there is a famous reference which leaves no doubt that the play was written for performance in the Globe Theatre:

> Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?

During a performance of *Henry VIII.* in 1613 an accident happened which caused the theatre to be burnt down. It was rebuilt next year in a more ornate and substantial style; but the earlier circular building will always have the greatest interest for students and readers of English drama, from the fact that a large majority of Shakespeare's plays were first produced there.

Internally the structure of these first theatres was simple, though it is easy to discern in it the germ of our modern arrangements. The auditorium was in the form of an amphitheatre, and the spectators stood in the pit or "yard"; but in addition to this provision there were also two or three galleries, corresponding to the circles of a modern theatre, where seats were provided. There were boxes, too, at the side of the stage, and possibly sometimes overlooking the scene from the back. Moreover, seats were actually provided on the stage itself for certain privileged persons,

who were wont to carry on an active and very audible criticism of the performance before the eyes of the whole house. This intolerable proceeding is treated to wholesome satire in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and with a more delicate humour in Dekker's *Guls Hornboke*. The stage of the Elizabethan theatre, however, had not the privacy of its modern descendant. There was no proscenium and no curtain to delimit it from the audience. It consisted of a rectangular platform exposed on three sides to the public, and the close of an act or scene was always marked by the exits of the performers, not by the fall of a curtain. This is clear from the scene-directions in the plays of the time. *Exeunt omnes* is the rule: in the case of tragic endings provision is always made for the removal of the dead. Controversy has raged round the question of the arrangements at the back of the stage. This area was flanked by two tiring-houses, and surmounted by an upper stage; the doubtful point is whether there was, underneath the upper stage, a kind of rear stage which could be curtained off. On the whole it is likely that such an arrangement did exist in the larger theatres such as the Globe and the Fortune; it would certainly simplify the performance of the last act of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, where no instructions are given for the removal of the bodies. Whether there was a rear stage or not, there must have been two doors, one on either side, for the entrance of the players. The very numerous hints in Elizabethan plays, of characters entering simultaneously from one side and the other, leave no doubt about this.

Scenery.—Scenery, in our modern sense of the term, did not exist. Obviously the open arrangement of the stage made it impossible to have any such elaborate and movable machinery. No attempt seems to have been made to represent places or scenes pictorially. The gap was filled, no doubt, partly by the use of suitable properties, and possibly by a bill indicating the country or city represented; but most commonly by the words of the actors themselves. The appeal was frankly made, as it is in the prologue to *Henry V.*, to the imagination of the audience; many well-known passages of descriptive poetry in the plays of Shakespeare and his fellow-playwrights were written to supply this deficiency of suggestive scenery. In court productions, doubtless, something more was done, and in the development of the masque under James I. the possibilities of symbolical decoration were exploited by the art of Inigo Jones and the fancy of Ben Jonson; but the dramatist proper did not profit by this, and during the whole of our fruitful dramatic epoch our greatest plays were produced on a stage bare of all imitative scenery. In the matter of properties and costumes, however, a great deal was done to aid the actor and his audience. Peter Quince, drawing up his "bill of properties," in this particular does not burlesque the manager of his time; and many entries in Henslowe's Diary show that considerable care was spent upon costumes and considerable expense incurred upon them. Here is one entry:

> Lent vnto the company to by a damask casocke garded w^th^ velluet the 7 of ap^rell^ 1598 the some xx^s^.

and there are many more of similar kind, showing that the company had a large stock of elaborate and expensive costumes, many of which were applied to more than one purpose.

The Plays.—Henslowe's Diary is merely a register of his commercial transactions, but it is not entirely occupied with "properties." It brings us also into contact with the playwrights and actors, and enables us to realize how a play was produced. Henslowe was a business-like manager, and set down his agreements in rigid black-and-white. Writers and actors alike hung around him. The following entry, for instance, brings before us two names well known in the literature of the time:

> Lent vnto drayton & cheattell the 13 of marche 1598 in pte paymente of a boocke wherin is a pte of a weallche man written wch they have promised to delyuer by the xx day next folowinge I saye lent R money xxxx s.

The Welshman, as we may gather from the contemporary *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*, was evidently a popular stage type; and here we see the enterprising manager taking care, on good recommendation, to forestall a play for the sake of a popular part which was doubtless congenial to some actor in his troupe, and paying commission for the introduction.

A suitable play having been obtained, it had to be licensed, *e.g.*:

> Layd owt the 28 of marche 1598 for the licencynge of ij booke to the Mr of the Revelles called the ij ptes of Robarte hoode xiiij s.

Then the company was obtained and the play read over, as a preliminary to rehearsals. That the actors needed a little encouragement at this stage seems to be the meaning of another entry in the diary:

> Lent at that tyme vnto the company for to spend at the readynge of that boocke at the sonne in new fyshstreate.

and an agreement between Henslowe and an actor named Dawes in 1614 provides for a fine of two shillings if Dawes failed to attend at rehearsal, and also for a fine of ten shillings if "he the saide Robert Dawes happen to be overcome with drinck at the tyme when he ought to play." The parts were learned from written copies made with their cues from the original manuscript and not from a printed copy. Few plays were printed by their authors. In the absence of any stringent law of copyright, piracy was common; actors supplied their manuscript copies to booksellers or printers, and obtained what they could for them. There is no evidence that Shakespeare, for example, received anything from the sale of the quarto editions of his plays: only seventeen of his plays, in fact, are known to have been printed before the First Folio edition of his works was made in 1623, the materials for which were supplied by his fellow-actors, Heminge and Condell, and the printer, William Jaggard. Whatever property existed in a play belonged to the management; hence the frequency of collaborations and revisions. Among the industrious collaborators were Fletcher, Massinger, Dekker, and Rowley, while Shakespeare himself began his

career by working over the plays of other men. No mention is made of the author of the "most lamentable comedy of *Pyramus and Thisbe*," the rehearsal and performance of which give a humorous travesty of the ordinary stage methods. We see the manager allotting his parts, arranging his properties, instructing the slower wits; we see the self-assertive actor who is anxious to be "in the limelight"; apparently the playwright was a nonentity—except when he was also an actor or interested in the management. In himself, the dramatist had hardly more dignity than the actor. Even the industrious Ben Jonson found the theatre a poor support and the writing of masques more profitable. The Bohemian lives of Marlowe, Peele, and Greene are an index of the playwright's position twenty years earlier.

The Audience.—The performance of a play in one of the public theatres was advertised by bills, posted in public places and outside the door of the theatre. It usually took place in the afternoon, beginning about three o'clock. The audience assembled early, and would spend the time of waiting in card-playing, at dice, or in rowdy horse-play; smoking and drinking were allowed; and doubtless people brought other helps to conviviality. Free criticism followed every point in the performance; if the play did not please the groundlings it was promptly hissed off the stage. The "dotages" of Ben Jonson suffered this fate, and even in his successful time Ben wrote contemptuously of playgoers who did not endure a thoughtful drama and demanded melodramatic impossibilities. The public paid to be amused, and its sense of humour was not, any more than it is now, of the intellectual sort. Hence the universal presence of "comic stuff" even in tragedy. But, whereas this is a ruinous intrusion in most plays, in Shakespeare it is responsible for Shallows and Fluellens and for a mighty group of wonderful fools, with Lear's fool as their king. A rougher element enters into such men as Dekker and Middleton; it is often enough indecent, but usually it is genuine and humanly interesting. The playwrights responded to their audiences, and the result was not always clean. Yet the melodrama of Marlowe enshrines the poetry of *Faustus;* the *vox populi* working in the genius of Shakespeare produced Falstaff. Many crudities of structure and finish in the Elizabethan drama must be ascribed to the conditions of its performance. But on the whole it was a full-blooded imaginative thing; and the men who made it, men who must needs often struggle for a livelihood amid the scum of society, were a remarkable body.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

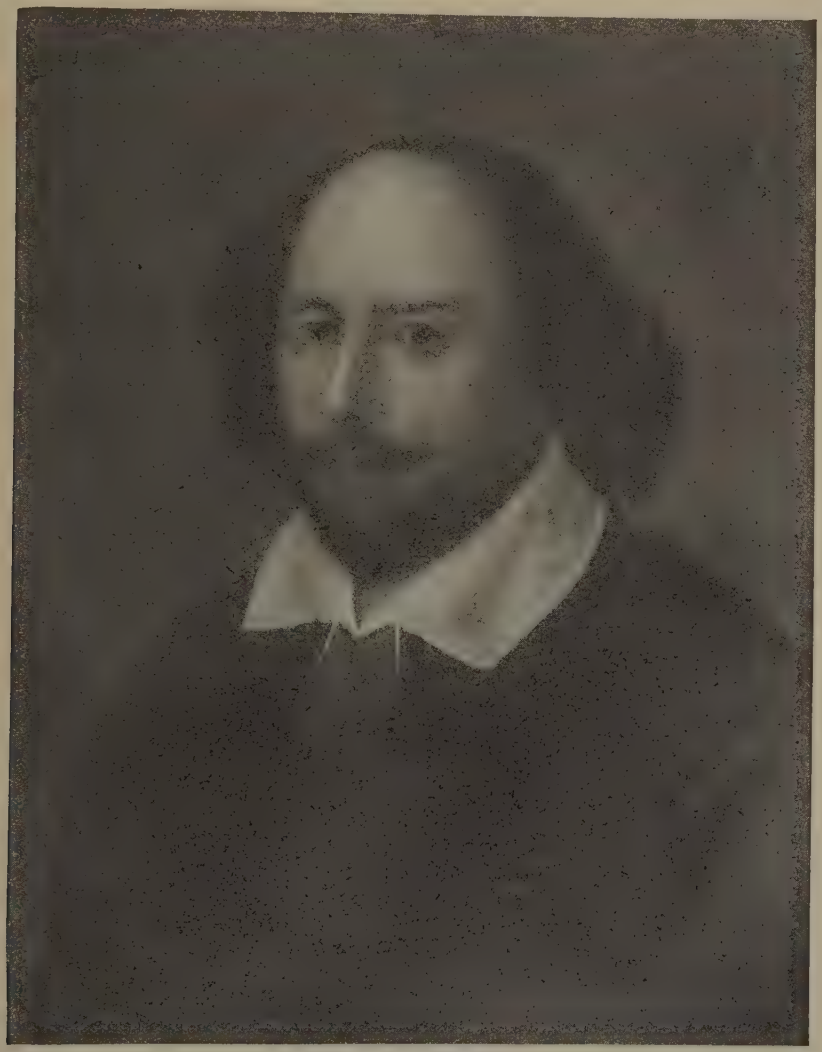
Shakespeare's England, Vol. II. (Clarendon Press, 1916).—WARD, Sir A. W.: *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, Vol. I. (Macmillan, 1899).—LEE, Sir S.: *A Life of William Shakespeare* (last ed., Murray, 1922).

Chapter 3. SHAKESPEARE

Marlowe and the other " university wits " had invaded the public theatre and taught it a great lesson. But the theatre had a lesson of its own which could only be learnt by one who lived and worked within its walls. English drama was brought to perfection, not by a scholar but by an actor. The actor was William Shakespeare.

Life.—Thanks to the world's insatiable curiosity and the patient research of students, more biographical facts have been collected about the greatest of English poets than about any of his literary contemporaries except Ben Jonson. Yet, when all is said, these facts, which are for the most part details of purchases and lawsuits, can be printed upon two sides of a sheet of notepaper, and learned volumes labelled *The Life of William Shakespeare* are of necessity replete with unverified tradition and " nice conjecture." The meagreness of this skeleton, together with the hypothetical " life " which has been built up round it—a structure now grown into something like an orthodox legend—has given rise to the insane, though not unnatural, heresies which fasten the authorship of the plays upon Francis Bacon, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Oxford, or any other nobleman of the time who may take the heretic's fancy. The soil upon which such weeds flourish is the assumption, to which the orthodox subscribe, that Shakespeare was an ill-educated rustic who did not leave Stratford until he was twenty-three years of age. This assumption is a mere guess, and not even a probable one. The truth is that we know practically nothing about Shakespeare before his thirtieth year. We know that he was christened William at Stratford on April 26, 1564, his parents being Mary, daughter of Robert Arden a well-to-do farmer of the neighbourhood, and John Shakespeare, general storekeeper of the little town, who became mayor in 1568 ; we know that he married Anne Hathaway towards the end of 1582 ; we know that she bore him a daughter, Susanna, six months later, and a twin boy and girl about a year and eight months from that date ; and that is all we know before 1592. We do not know how or where he was educated, when he joined the stage, or at what period he went to London. Almost any conceivable interpretation may be placed upon these slender data. Beyond the fact that he wrote the old " English " hand, which suggests that he learnt his letters from an old-fashioned (and possibly provincial) scribe, there is not a tittle of evidence to support the generally accepted idea that he received his education at the free grammar school of Stratford. Moreover, seeing that the mature Shakespeare had demonstrably picked up as good an education in life and the world's concerns as any man before or since, it is well to remember that in his day there were alternatives to the grammar school, which would be fitter nurseries for dramatic genius and more in keeping with that

passion for music which we know he possessed, namely, employment as a boy with a troupe of actors or service as a singer in the retinue of some nobleman. The dates of his marriage and the birth of his three children tell us nothing about the time of



William Shakespeare.

his departure from Stratford. All that they prove is that he must have been at home about August 1582, nine months before the birth of Susanna; again for his marriage

in November; and once again in the summer of 1584, nine months before the birth of the twins. Now it so happens that the years 1582–4 saw the greatest plague of Elizabeth's reign, during which all the theatres were closed. If, therefore, the young Shakespeare were already connected with the stage at that period, his entanglement with Anne Hathaway and what followed therefrom exactly synchronize with two years of idleness for the acting profession, when he would be most likely to be kicking his heels at home.

As Actor and Playwright.—But let us pass on to dates and references which stand out like rocks from the sea of conjecture, and rocks upon which we can build with some assurance. Whatever may have been Shakespeare's previous career, by 1592 he had already won fame both as a player and a dramatist. The evidence for this is all the more striking in that it comes to us from an unfriendly quarter—the most prolific dramatist of the old school, whose plays Shakespeare was rendering obsolete, partly by the effective method of rewriting them. Shortly before his squalid death on September 3, 1592, Robert Greene wrote a pamphlet entitled *A Groatsworth of Wit,* in the course of which he advised his "fellow Schollers about this Cittie," in particular Marlowe, Peele, and a "young Juvenal" who is generally identified with Nashe, to surrender the vain art of play-making, "for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes factotum*, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrie." The obvious pun in "Shake-scene" and the parody of the line "O Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide" (*3 Henry VI.*, I. iv. 137) leave no doubt that Shakespeare is meant, and it is interesting to note that the attack was unpleasing to a certain section of the public, if we may judge from the apology which Henry Chettle, the publisher of the pamphlet, printed later in the same year. The words of this apology are a significant tribute to Shakespeare's position at this date. "I am as sory," writes Chettle, "as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanour no less ciuill then he excelent in the qualitie he professes, besides divers of worship haue reported his vprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that aprooues his art." The character of these "divers of worship" may be gleaned from the dedications to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, published in 1593 and 1594 respectively—the only books which Shakespeare ever saw personally through the press. Both are addressed to the young Earl of Southampton, the first in terms of respect, the second in language which breathes affection and intimacy. By 1594 Shakespeare was clearly *persona grata*, to say the least, to Southampton and his circle, of which Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Essex, was the most distinguished member. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that the dramatist was seen at court. His earliest recorded performance before the queen took place at Christmas 1594, his name being mentioned with those of Kempe and

Burbage as one of the three leading men. It is not likely, however, that this was his first appearance in Elizabeth's presence. Indeed, there was more than personal rancour in Greene's deathbed outburst. The triumph of Shakespeare was the triumph of the Chamberlain's Men, the acting company to which he belonged, over the Queen's Men for whom Greene wrote. From their formation in 1583 the Queen's Men were constant performers at court until Christmas 1591 ; the Children of Paul's, Lyly's company, being their only serious rival. After 1591, however, their place is taken in the records by a new company, namely, Lord Strange's Men, who, on the death of their patron in 1594, became the Lord Chamberlain's Men. The genesis of this company and its rapid rise into favour are surprising and mysterious. They played nine times before the queen between Christmas 1591 and January 1593, and it is very tempting to suppose that their success was due to Shakespeare, though there is no actual proof that he was a member of the company before 1594.

In any event by 1594, the thirtieth year of his age, Shakespeare had already, professionally speaking, attained the height of his ambitions. He was a leading man of his company, a member of the most brilliant of court circles, a famous poet, and a dramatist of such acknowledged power that the dying Greene, in effect, advised his fellow-scholars to give up trying to compete with him. The highest position in the land open to a man of his birth and gifts was won ; and it only remained to consolidate it by further dramatic triumphs, by the acquisition of property, and by obtaining the right to sign himself " William Shakespeare, Gentleman." This consolidation rapidly followed. In 1598 the critic Meres described him as the best dramatist of the time both in comedy and tragedy ; in 1597 Shakespeare had begun his purchases of land in Stratford by buying New Place, the largest house in the town ; in 1596 he made application, in his father's name, to the College of Heralds for a coat of arms, which he obtained in 1599. His career was very English, and, outwardly at any rate, differed little from that of thousands of other sons of middle-class parents gifted with brains. But history, whose pages are often blank when we are most anxious to read them, tells us nothing of the struggles which preceded the day of his success.

Dramatic Career.—In his dedicatory epistle, Shakespeare describes *Venus and Adonis* as " the first heir of my invention." Everything points to the conclusion that his early dramatic efforts were not the heirs of his invention, but revisions of other men's work. Greene's gibe at the " upstart crow beautified with our feathers " was only an inversion of the truth ; the beautiful feathers were the upstart's, the crows were the plays of Greene and his fellow-scholars. Not that such revision was in any way reprehensible, or, in that age, unusual. Manuscript plays were entirely within the control of the company which purchased them, its own dramatist being free to make what alterations seemed good to him. The years 1591–4 were another season of bad plague, not so serious as that of 1582–4, but nevertheless involving the players in many difficulties. The history of the acting companies at this period is still very

obscure, but there was clearly a good deal of temporary amalgamation and shifting to and fro. During these years of confusion it is probable that the manuscripts of many plays passed through Shakespeare's hands. It is even more probable that, as the fortunes of the Queen's Men began to decline, they were forced to sell their manuscripts from time to time in order to make both ends meet; and if so, their most eager customers would be the Strange-Chamberlain Men, who, as they climbed the ladder of court favour, would desire to enlarge their repertoire by the acquisition of fresh playhouse copy. Moreover, there were other companies, such as the Earl of Pembroke's Men, who came to grief at this period, and had therefore manuscripts to dispose of. In a word, there is a high probability that the Chamberlain Men became possessed of a considerable quantity of dramatic material in the early years of their prosperity, and Shakespeare was certainly not the man to invent a new play when he had one ready plotted to his hand. Further, it should not be forgotten that at this juncture fate swept the board of his competitors, and left him to pursue his course without a serious rival. In 1591 the company of Paul's Boys was dissolved, and Lyly's occupation was gone; Greene died in 1592; Kyd was arrested early in 1593, fell into disgrace, and died in 1594; Peele was already in very low water in 1592, apparently wrote no plays after that date, and was dead in 1598; Lodge had renounced the stage in 1589; finally Marlowe, the greatest of them all, was murdered in 1593. Truly the critical years 1591–4 were very favourable to the upstart crow; and there is no knowing how many plays in the Shakespearean canon were based upon the work of those " scholars about the city " with whom fate dealt so unkindly.

The Plays.—The prevalent idea that Shakespeare constructed his plays *ab initio* with a quire of clean foolscap before him and a volume of North's Plutarch, Holinshed, or a collection of Italian novels, in translation, at his elbow, is likely to yield place to a conception of him as a lifelong renovator of old plays, his own and those of others. We know now that many of the original texts were printed direct from his manuscripts, and a bibliographical analysis of these texts reveals the fact that they were rarely if ever printed from clean copy, unrevised; while there is internal evidence which suggests that even *The Tempest*, probably the last play he ever handled, was founded upon earlier dramatic material. But critical bibliography has as yet hardly begun its work upon the canon, and it is too early to generalize. One thing, however, must here be said. Even if it could be shown that Shakespeare never from beginning to end of his career plotted and wrote a play entirely his own, that would not in the least detract from his greatness as a dramatist. If he did not create, he certainly re-created. We know, for example, enough of the pre-Shakespearean *Hamlet* to realize what a creaking rhetorical piece of stage machinery it was. Under Shakespeare's hands, working with the utmost regard for economy of the original material, it became the greatest and subtlest play in the literature of the world. That he began with an old play by Kyd, or some other, was simply a necessity laid upon him by the circumstances of his craft. The original *Hamlet* manuscript came into the

possession of his company; it was good dramatic copy for an Elizabethan audience, which delighted in the "tragedy of blood"; and Shakespeare's *duty* was to work over it, and do his best to transform it into something worth the attention not only of the generality but of the judicious. He succeeded to the top of admiration. Is *Hamlet* less of a masterpiece because Shakespeare painted it upon the old canvas of another man?

Directly we conceive of Shakespeare's dramatic career in these terms, the question of the order of his plays assumes a new complication. Revision and revival were closely associated; and if Shakespeare added fresh touches to his plays whenever his company decided that the time had come to revive them upon the stage, how can we date them? Beyond remarking that a play must have reached finality before it appeared in print, as many of Shakespeare's plays did during his lifetime, we cannot do more here than state the problem—a problem which has still to be faced. At present we must content ourselves with the chronological classification of the plays which has come to us from the 19th-century critics, who utilized for the purpose internal evidences of style and metre, references to Shakespeare by contemporary writers, and supposed allusions in the plays to current events. Fortunately it is not likely that the main outlines of this classification will be seriously disturbed by future investigation; and its results, which are given in tabular form at the end of this chapter, are therefore sufficiently assured to enable us to follow the development of Shakespeare's genius.

The Shakespeare Bust in the Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon.

The Comedies.—The plays upon which he worked in the main before 1594 are remarkable for the variety of their species rather than for success in any one kind. Shakespeare was learning his craft and experimenting in every type of drama then upon the stage: history, tragedy of blood, comedy of wit, comedy of intrigue, romantic comedy. Moreover, Marlowe and the other university men were still writing for the theatre at this period, and in the confusion of companies due to the plague, Shakespeare, no doubt, collaborated with some of them. Before 1594 Shakespeare was a brilliant apprentice.

His earliest masterpieces, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Richard II.*, probably reached their final form in his thirtieth year (1594). They remind us of his teachers Marlowe and Lyly, but they are no longer imitations, and for the next six years Shakespeare writes hardly anything that does not belong to the very first rank.

This is the period of great comedy. The poet bathes everything in the golden light of joy and frolic. Falstaff, the supreme comic character of literature and the central figure of no less than three plays, is master of the revels. And when he passes away "babbling o' green fields" the vein is not exhausted, for to the last three years of the century belong the most exquisite of all Shakespeare's comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. This again is Shakespeare's English period. Bottom and Sly are labourers of Stratford; Puck frights the maidens of the Warwickshire villagery; the forest of Arden had lain at the poet's door in infancy; while the patriotic note, first struck in the character of Faulconbridge and in John of Gaunt's dying speech, grows louder and deeper until it finds complete expression in the national epic of *Henry V*. Finally, it is the period of the great historical plays, the four wonderful dramas on the rise and triumph of the House of Lancaster. Shakespeare's advance upon the work of his apprenticehood in the matter of character delineation is very remarkable. Before 1594 he was a clever ventriloquist with a large variety of puppets; he is now the creator of men and women far more real than the majority of those we encounter in real life. Blank verse, too, which had once cramped the poet's hand like a new glove, has become as flexible as a second skin, and is steeped in the lyrical spirit which had been Shakespeare's from the first, so that *Romeo and Juliet* for lyrical tragedy, and *Twelfth Night* for lyrical comedy, have no rivals in any language. This spirit, which gave us the haunting songs that the magician scatters like pearls over his plays, seldom if ever reappears after 1600 with the same fine careless rapture.

The Tragedies.—At the beginning of the 17th century Shakespeare suddenly turns from comedy to tragedy. He casts aside the motley of Touchstone for the sable of Prince Hamlet. Hitherto content to enjoy life, he now sets himself to grapple with its problems. It is impossible not to suspect that this was the result of a spiritual crisis in the poet's own mind, and many have pretended to discover the story of such a crisis in his *Sonnets*, first printed in 1609, though most if not all of them written years earlier. Ardent devotion to a friend who proves unworthy; bitter infatuation for a dark-browed mistress whom he knows to be unfaithful: such are the elements in Shakespeare's romance which these poems convey to us by hints that tantalize because they tell us so little. But whether the story of the *Sonnets* is a sufficient explanation of the tragic pomp that swept through the mind of the dramatist during these eight marvellous years is another question. The first step along the path of tragedy was taken in *Julius Cæsar*, and it was followed almost immediately by *Hamlet*. There is much in common between Brutus the scholarly idealist and Hamlet the brooding philosopher. Each is unfitted by excess of intellectual activity for the task that the world lays upon him. *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, therefore, are tragedies of reflection. They move slowly, they are pitched in a low key, and the effect they produce is that of depth and subtlety rather than of grandeur. In the three dramas that follow, *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*, the whole atmosphere is different; and

Shakespeare is now occupied with the passions rather than with the intellect. He sets us on the heights of the world, and presents to us a pageant of titanic figures struggling in vain against the mighty forces of evil. At times the strain becomes almost unendurable. *Othello*, dramatically the swiftest and most perfect of all the tragedies, deals with the terrible theme of sexual jealousy. With dreadful fascination we watch Iago, the incarnation of evil, spinning his web of intrigue ; and when the inevitable catastrophe falls like a thunderbolt from some sultry sky, nothing but the sweet rain of pity can absolve us from the horror of it. In *Lear*, too huge, too vague, too fearful for the stage, though Shakespeare's greatest imaginative creation, we have the spectacle of aged fathers tortured in mind and body by unnatural children ; and the storm that rages through the play seems to shake the very universe to its foundations. The atmosphere of *Macbeth* is night, a night of horrors and despair. Hovering through the fog and filthy air are foul hags grinning and capering in obscene dances, and the darkness is only broken by the flash of the murderer's knife or by a flickering candle that shows us the face of a great soul brought to ruin and madness by the consequences of crime. But not even Shakespeare could keep long on these perilous heights, and in the last two plays of this period the tragic note is less intense, though the principal figures are no less titanic in build. *Antony and Cleopatra* turns upon the conflict between ambition and passion ; *Coriolanus* shows us a Renaissance superman at war with the mob. Both are classical in theme, and derived, like *Julius Cæsar*, from Plutarch's *Lives*.

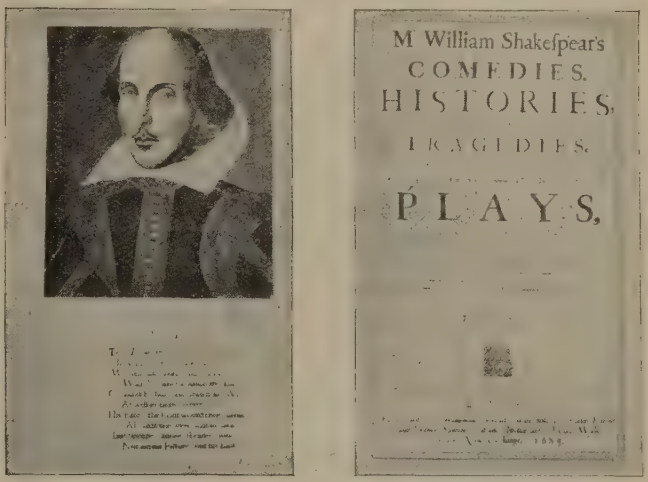
The Last Phase.—About 1609 the storm of tragedy passes away almost as suddenly as it had come, leaving behind it a sky of peace and serenity. In the three plays belonging to the last phase Shakespeare returns to comedy ; but it is comedy of a new kind, vibrating with the " still sad music of humanity." *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, all strike the note of reconciliation and forgiveness for past wrongs, all are bathed in a light of kindliness and tolerance, the light that falls from an old man's eyes. The first two are loose in structure, being rather romances in dramatic form than plays, in which they are curiously reminiscent of the work of Greene. *The Tempest* is also a dramatized romance ; but here, as for a final effort, Shakespeare puts forth the utmost resources of his art, so that no play of his is technically more perfect. This exquisite fantasy introduces us once again to the fairy world that appears in the earliest masterpieces, and in Prospero, the old magician who breaks his wand and casts his book into the sea, we like to see the mighty wizard Shakespeare himself taking leave of the world of art which he had peopled with the teeming spirits of his imagination. Though certainty is here as elsewhere denied to us, there can be little doubt that *The Tempest* was the last of Shakespeare's plays to appear under his personal supervision. About 1611 he ceased to be writer for his company, and went to live at Stratford, his latter years, in the words of Nicholas Rowe, being " spent, as all good men of sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." Death came in 1616.

The Genius of Shakespeare.—Shakespeare is at once the greatest and the most popular of writers. It was his business to please the "groundlings" as well as the cultured noblemen in the box; and his success in doing so then is one of the causes of his success now. *As You Like It* he frankly dubbed one of his plays; it is still as we like it. Falstaff is the wittiest character in English drama; he is also the fattest. Shakespeare had, and still has, something for everybody, and he gave of his abundance. No writer in the history of the world had a more intimate knowledge of the human heart. He could "probe from hell to hell of human passions," and yet could command a laugh "broad as ten thousand beeves at pasture." This profound sympathy, this universality of appeal, are the secrets of Shakespeare's greatness. Men love to see him acted and to read him, because he lays bare to them their own souls, because he gives expression to their most varied moods. But, with all his sympathy and understanding, he could never have conquered the world as he did without the gift of song. To express the whole scale of human emotion he has a corresponding gamut of style. From the airy melodies of his lyrics to the mighty harmonies of his great soliloquies, Shakespeare is a master of word-music. He has not the level flight of Chaucer. He worked so rapidly, and at such high pressure, that at times he is commonplace, bombastic, obscure. But these times are seldom; and when he wills he can with one sweep of his wing outsoar his mightiest rival. His magic is most evident in his power of giving such a turn to thoughts and observations which are not in themselves either original or profound that they come to us with all the force of a new revelation. He has caught up the sentiments that find an echo in every breast, and has clothed them with the rainbow and pearl of his divine utterance. He is the poet of our common humanity; and through him England will continue to rule the minds of men, when her temporal empire is "one with Nineveh and Tyre."

Yet, for all his genius, it cannot be denied that Shakespeare was assisted by circumstances. He was fortunate in his predecessors, who rendered his task the easier and his output the greater by providing him with plots and with plays in manuscript. It was fortunate for him, and therefore for us, that drama happened to be the chief literary form of his age, since none was more fitted to give scope for his many-sided knowledge of human nature. It was fortunate, too, that his school of experience was the acting profession. There not only did he learn to impersonate all sorts and conditions of men, and perhaps in his earlier days of women also, and so came to ponder over the problems of character and personality; but he learnt there as well to realize the necessity, which his craft imposed upon him, of pleasing all sections of his audience. Finally, he was fortunate in living at a period of luxuriant imagination, when men seemed to find it easier than ever before or since to give vent to their thoughts in beautiful language. Both in the width of his sympathies and in the magic of his word-music Shakespeare differed in degree but not in kind from his contemporaries.

The Texts.—In conclusion, a word must be said about the text of Shakespeare.

The earliest collected edition of his plays, complete except for *Pericles* (which has come down to us in an imperfect text) was published seven years after his death, in 1623. This volume, known as the First Folio, included twenty plays that had not previously seen the light of print, and two that had only appeared in pirated form. Fourteen plays, however, with good texts which often formed the basis of the corresponding texts in the Folio, preceded the publication of that book, and were issued in quarto form. These, with the dates of publication, were: *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Richard III.* (1597), *Richard II.* (1597), *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598), *1 Henry IV.* (1598), *Romeo and Juliet* (1599), *Merchant of Venice* (1600), *Much Ado* (1600), *2 Henry IV.* (1600), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600), *Hamlet* (1604–5), *Lear* (1608), *Troilus and Cressida* (1609), *Othello* (1622). By adding to them *Venus and Adonis* (1593), *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and the *Sonnets* (1609), we bring up the number of "good" quarto volumes to seventeen. On the other hand, we have five "bad" texts, viz., *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Henry V.* (1600), *The Merry Wives* (1602), *Hamlet* (1603), and *Pericles* (1608), all of which are probably based upon theatrical abridgments, touched up in the case of the first four by a pirate-actor, who filled out the gaps in the abridgments as best he could from memory. Recent research has done much to emphasize the importance of these quarto texts, claiming, among other things, that many of the "good quartos" were printed direct from Shakespeare's own manuscripts. At the same time an even more sensational claim has lately been advanced—namely, that a scene of 147 lines in a partially revised 16th-century manuscript play, entitled *Sir Thomas More*, at the British Museum, is actually in the handwriting of the master-dramatist himself. It seems likely, therefore, that we are at the beginning of a new era in Shakespearean textual scholarship.



Title-page and Frontispiece of the Fourth Folio of the Plays.

TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE APPROXIMATE DATES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

(Plays are grouped according to subject-matter or species, within a given period)

A.—Apprenticeship and Experiment, before 1594

i. Tragedy of Blood.
Titus Andronicus (? Shakespeare).

ii. Histories (Wars of the Roses).
1, 2, and *3 Henry VI.* } with Marlowe and others.
Richard III. }

iii. Comedies (wit; intrigue; romance).
Love's Labour's Lost (after Lyly).
Comedy of Errors (after Plautus).
Two Gentlemen of Verona (after Greene).

B.—The Period of Great Comedy, 1594–1600

i. Fantasy, 1594.
Midsummer Night's Dream.

ii. Italian Plays, 1596–8.
Romeo and Juliet (lyrical tragedy).
Merchant of Venice (tragi-comedy).
Taming of the Shrew (farce; parts not Shakespearean).

iii. Histories, 1594–9.
(*a*) *King John.*
(*b*) *Richard II.* (tragedy; 1594).
1 and *2 Henry IV.* (comedy; 1597–8).
Henry V. (comedy; 1599).
(*c*) *Merry Wives* (pendant to *Henry IV.*; non-historical; 1598).

iv. The Height of Comedy, 1598–1600.
Much Ado About Nothing (wit).
As You Like It (pastoral).
Twelfth Night (lyrical; intrigue).

C.—The Period of Great Tragedy, 1600–8

i. Tragedy of Intellect, 1600–1.
Julius Cæsar (first Plutarch play).
Hamlet.

ii. Bitter Comedies, ? 1601–7.
All's Well. } ? Other men's work imperfectly revised by Shakespeare.
Measure for Measure. }
Troilus and Cressida. }

iii. The Height of Tragedy, 1604–6.
Othello (jealousy).
Lear (ingratitude).
Macbeth (crime and conscience).

iv. Less Intense Tragedy, 1607–8 (Plutarch).
Antony and Cleopatra (mature passion).
Coriolanus (superman *v.* mob).
Timon of Athens (misanthropy; ? parts not Shakespearean).

D.—Serene Comedy, 1609–11

Cymbeline. } Dramatic romances.
Winter's Tale. }
Tempest. }

N.B.—*Pericles, c.* 1607, extant text imperfect.

Henry VIII. } Doubtful whether Shakespeare was concerned in these
Two Noble Kinsmen. }

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

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Facsimiles.—*First Folio* (Clarendon Press, 1902; Methuen, 1905); *Poems* (Clarendon Press, 1905); *Quartos*, ed. F. J. Furnivall and W. Griggs (43 vols., Quaritch, 1881–91).

Chapter 4. BEN JONSON, CHAPMAN, MARSTON, AND DEKKER

Jonson's Comedy of Humours: *Every Man in his Humour; Every Man out of his Humour*—Satire: *The Poetaster*—Popular Comedy: *Volpone, Epicene, The Alchemist, Bartholomew Fair*—Tragedy: *Sejanus, Catiline*—Masques and Pastoral Drama—Poems and Prose Works—Chapman—Marston—Dekker

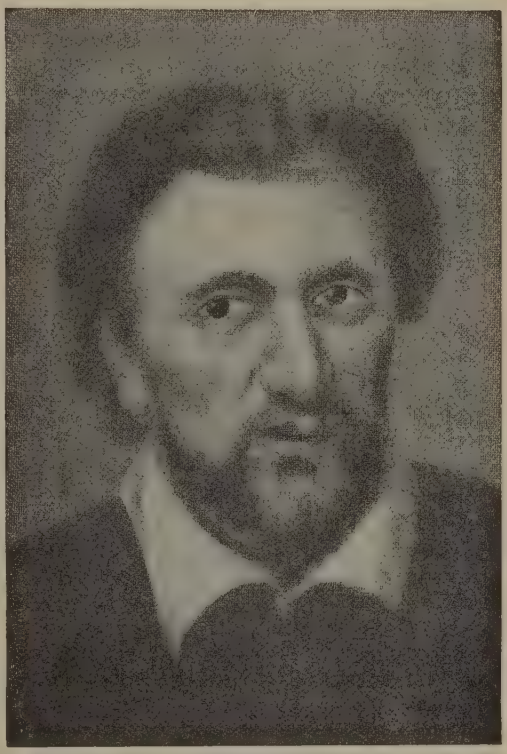
BEN JONSON (1573–1637)

Ben Jonson (or Johnson, as he more frequently spelt the name) was of Scottish extraction, and was born at Westminster in 1573. His father had been deprived of his estate during the reign of Mary, and had become a minister after that queen's death; he died about a month before the dramatist came into existence. His widow married again, a bricklayer, whose name is said to have been Fowler; and it was in the bricklayer's home in Hartshorne Lane, near Charing Cross, that Ben's childhood was spent. From the sneers of some of his enemies we gather that Ben learned his stepfather's trade. About 1593 he gave up bricklaying and enlisted in the English army, then serving in Flanders: there, as he told Drummond of Hawthornden, he slew an enemy in single combat and carried off his arms in the presence of both armies. The fearless pugnacity thus indicated was characteristic of him throughout his life. His military career was short, and he returned to London—possibly for a while to bricklaying; but not long afterwards he must have become connected with the stage. *Every Man in his Humour* was acted in 1598, and that play is so mature a production as to suggest a good deal of experience in stage matters. Like Shakespeare, he is supposed to have served his apprenticeship as an actor, but without any real success. His appearance seems to have been against him. He probably touched up old plays and collaborated on new ones, now lost. By 1597 he had become sufficiently well known to be engaged on a commission for Henslowe, the owner of the Rose Theatre—a commission which apparently he did not carry out. About this time he mortally wounded a fellow-actor in a duel, and had to stand his trial at the Old Bailey on the charge of murder. While in prison, Jonson is said to have become a Roman Catholic, through the intervention of a priest who visited him; he was suspected of sharing in a Popish conspiracy, and was watched by spies; and it was some time before he obtained release.

Jonson's quarrelsome proclivities drew him during the next three years into a violent quarrel with some of his fellow-playwrights and satirists like Dekker and Marston. It was probably about 1605 that the famous meetings at the Mermaid tavern commenced, with their jovial good fellowship and their celebrated wit combats. The accession of James I. was a fortunate event for Jonson; he

became a favourite with the king from the first, and during the whole of his reign was continuously employed in the production of court entertainments, and enjoyed his highest prosperity. In 1605 he seems to have been employed by the court in some mysterious business connected with the Gunpowder Plot. At this time he was still a Catholic, and remained so for some four or five years more.

During the next five years (1605–10) he continued to write masques for the court and other patrons; but he did not neglect the public, and *Volpone*, produced at the Globe in 1605, was one of his greatest popular triumphs; he was almost as successful in *Epicene* (1609) and *The Alchemist* (1610), the latter of which represents the climax of his genius in comedy: in 1614 he again made a hit at the Hope Theatre, Bankside, with the lively and amusing comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*. Meanwhile, he had become acquainted at the Mermaid with Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he assisted with his *History of the World*, and whose son he accompanied to Paris in 1613. Young Raleigh seems to have given his tutor a lively time, and to have taken advantage of his convivial habits to play absurd practical jokes upon him.



Ben Jonson.
(From a painting by Gerard Honthorst.)

One more comedy, *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), together with a number of masques, completes the tale of Ben's work during the rest of James I.'s reign. In 1618 he set out on foot to visit Scotland, and during one month of the ensuing winter was the guest of the poet Drummond of Hawthornden. Drummond afterwards wrote in his *Conversations* an account of this visit, recording many of the chief confidences of his guest, which dealt with his private life, his trenchant opinions, and his personal habits. This record does not show Ben in a very favourable light—unintentionally on Drummond's part, no doubt; and Ben's own notes and impressions were unfortunately lost when his library was burnt. In 1621 the King granted him the reversion of the office of Master of the Revels, with a pension.

The year 1625, in which King James died, was a disastrous turning-point in

Jonson's life. His one play, *The Staple of News*, was not successful, and showed unmistakable evidence of declining power. He was stricken with palsy, and in his helpless position was rapidly reduced to poverty and misery. A new play, *The New Inn*, which appeared in 1629, was hissed off the stage. The epilogue, which was not reached in the performance, is a mournful plea, in dismal half-anticipation of failure. It also hints at King Charles's neglect of him, in comparison with his previous fortune. The king replied by a gift of £100; and on a second appeal raised Ben's pension to £100 a year, supplementing this with an annual gift of a "tierce" of Ben's favourite Canary wine (1630). But luck went against the hapless poet next year, when he quarrelled with Inigo Jones, the designer of the spectacular portion of the court masques. In the midst of his natural jealousies, disappointment, and disease, he plodded on; and one thing that he wrote during these years of decline, the fragment of a pastoral called *The Sad Shepherd*, is the most beautiful piece of poetry he has left us. He died on August 6, 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. On the plain flagstone that alone covers his grave are roughly inscribed the words "O Rare Ben Johnson!"

Ben Jonson's Theory of the Drama.—The appearance of *Every Man in his Humour* marked an epoch in the history of the drama; no comedy has ever appeared with a more self-conscious flourish. The young playwright, who as yet had done nothing for the theatre but botch up other men's work, came forward with a revolutionary manifesto, in which a new theory of comedy was presented and an example of the theory in practice boldly given. To begin with, he rates "the ill customs of the age" in romantic drama, which allow the most ridiculous improbabilities of plot and scene. As a classical scholar he had a natural affection for the close-knit structure which was obtained by adherence to the unities; he would not "turn the accomplishment of many years into an hour-glass," nor allow the stage

> with three rusty swords,
> And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,
> Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.

To attempt this was, in his view, an absurdity. Nor was he less severe against appeals to the melodramatic instincts of the less-instructed parts of the audience; whatever might become farcical or ridiculous, whatever panders to the boys who are pleased if "creaking throne comes down," he eliminates from his scope. The improbabilities of the romantic drama, its unreal foreign air, its casual and unnatural plots, seemed to his trained taste degrading and unfit for serious comedy. And so his classicism led him to realism: instead of improbable scenes in an impossible country, instead of high-flown language, he would give

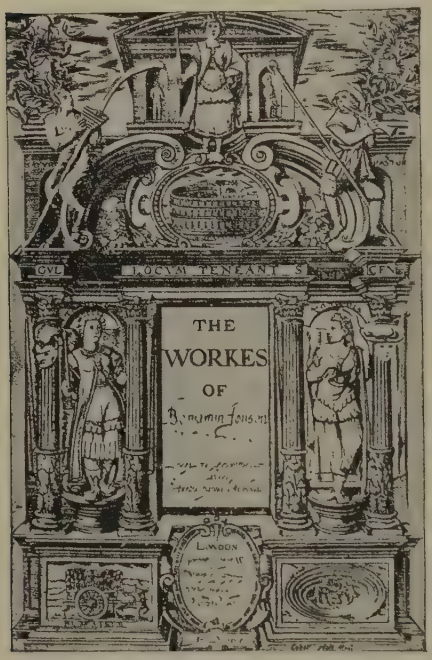
> Deeds and language, such as men do use,
> And persons such as comedy would choose,
> When she would show an image of the times,
> And sport with human follies, not their crimes.

In pursuit of this realism, in confining comedy to an image of the times, he took his examples from the London that he and his hearers familiarly knew; and his method was so far successful that his comedies do give us a lifelike picture of the less pleasing aspects of Elizabethan London. In putting his taboo at once upon farce and upon romance, he has undoubtedly achieved reality. And incidentally he created the comedy of manners.

Ben Jonson's "Humours."—His theory seemed sound and was supported by a vigorous display of learning and reason. Yet Shakespeare's comedy, which flouts it at every point, is still alive; and Jonson's is, except for students, certainly languishing, if not dead. Jonson was a keen observer, and not a mere scholarly recluse: his plays are not the laborious spinnings of a pedant, but riotous with vitality. Why then are they so little read? Why are so few of his characters "familiar in our mouths as household words"? The answer is that his characters are not characters, but *humours*. They embody a theory of human nature which, in its absolute form, as Jonson uses it, is false to the facts. The physiology of the time conceived the normal man as regulated by a harmonious blend of the humours engendered in the liver, heart, spleen, etc.; and a man's temperament—melancholy or jovial, sanguine or morose—was the result of the preponderance of one or other of these humours. When the excess goes beyond a certain degree, the result is a folly, an affectation, an unbalanced enthusiasm, a "humour" in Jonson's sense. To deal with these, to expel them by laughter or ridicule, is the proper mission of comedy. Jonson's comedies are therefore a study of humours, especially those which are ridiculous or exaggerated. His conception of the province of the Comic Spirit is sound, and essentially that of Meredith; but in spite of it he has not retained the affection of readers for his characters, nor can we imagine his plays presented on the modern stage. They do not lack intellect. What they lack is humour in our sense, and the shaping spirit of imagination which sees life steadily and whole. Morally he is always on the side of sanity and virtue; imaginatively he gives us much of the warmth that comes from friction, little of the serene light that endures.

His Comedies.—Jonson's comedies contain his best work, and the first of them remains for most of his readers the most characteristic and very nearly the best. *Every Man in his Humour* is a study of a number of familiar humours, some of them quite interesting, such as Knowell and his prodigal son, the jealous citizen, Kitely, and the various gulls. In Bobadil, the boastful soldier, we have Ben's nearest approach to a complete human character; but he is not in the same world, as a dramatic creation, as Pistol or Falstaff. In *Every Man out of his Humour* (1598), Jonsonian theories are seen more blatantly at work. The satirical purpose and the effort at realism are evident, but none of the characters live. We have Jonson himself intruding in Asper and Macilente, and Marston, perhaps, in Carlo Buffone.

Each humour is cured by an overdose of itself in the fifth act. The introduction of thinly veiled contemporaries is continued in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), which as a play is poor, but has biographical interest, and in *The Poetaster* (1601), in which he deals his final blow at the barbarities of his enemies. This play has its scene laid at Rome, and there is much interesting literary talk in which Ovid, Horace, and Virgil, among others, take part. *Volpone* (1605) is a masterly study of utter greed and almost unredeemed depravity; Jonson has forsaken personal quarrels and taken up completely the position of satirist. It is a comedy of great force, in masterly verse, almost tragic in conception; but the characters are too black and one sighs for a little humorous relief. The same is true of *The Alchemist* (1610), which is a study of several forms of hypocrisy, such as the cunning of the nefarious Subtle and his accomplices, the puritanism of Tribulation Wholesome, and the luxurious greed of Sir Epicure Mammon. *Epicene* (1609) is in lighter vein, and comes nearest perhaps to our modern idea of comedy, with its agreeable ending. *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) returns to the company of the London gulls and fools, and is remarkable for its admirable picture of the life and bustle, sordid and squalid though it is, of a London place of amusement. A kind of realism is achieved here, but again it is not that of character. The remaining comedies show a falling off in power. They are not without merit, and *The Staple of News* (1625) is almost allegorical in its generalization of the "humours." From *The New Inn* (1629) we are dealing simply with "Ben's dotages." They are the death-knell of his method; what he could but imperfectly achieve, no one else has attempted.



Title-page of Ben Jonson's "Workes," 1616.

His Tragedies.—The two tragedies, *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611), fall below the standard of the best comedies as plays, and suffer severely from comparison with Shakespeare's Roman dramas; but if they do not rise to the heights and depths of tragic passion they have a stately dignity, rather frigid perhaps and overweighted with conscientious learning, yet not deficient in poetry and grandeur. The two plays can be read with pleasure by the fit readers that Ben desired; but even they

will feel that something is wanting—the accent of high passion and mighty issues centred in the fates of men.

The Masques.—In the masques the dramatic part had to be subordinate to the dancing, the music, and the spectacular effect; but, accepting these limitations, Jonson used his position so well that he may be said to have created the literary masque. At his best he rises near to the level of *Comus;* his skill in the weaving of an allegorical plot was admirable, his poetic fancy often very happy, and his power to turn a compliment to the king or queen curiously apt. Akin to the masques is *The Sad Shepherd,* which is a wholly delightful pastoral fantasy of the greenwood, romantic in its spirit and variety; in it Jonson abandoned his theories and allowed the poet in him his full play, with the happiest result.

Occasional Poems.—As a poet pure and simple Jonson had his fortunate moments, but his verse is throughout distinguished by strength and accuracy of form rather than by inspiration. His epigrams are occasionally terse and pointed, especially when the example of Martial is near to his hand. In complimentary addresses to friends and fellow-poets he is generally too verbose, but, as in the lines on Shakespeare, he could sometimes strike a happy phrase expressing judicious praise. A few lyrics will survive for their felicity of form, which joins them rather to the Caroline than to the Elizabethan manner. But, on the whole, his poems and songs reveal the scholar and the literary man, not the lover or the natural elegist. A few will find their way into all anthologies: the rest will be left to students who may not find them too arid and jejune. The prose of the *Discoveries* comes under the same criticism.

Summary.—Jonson was quarrelsome and self-opinionated, often merely boastful; he was contemptuously aware of his superiority to such men as Marston and Dekker, and could not conceal his knowledge; but the charge of envy at other men's success cannot be sustained against the author of the noble tribute to Shakespeare in the folio of 1623. He was animated by a serious literary and didactic purpose, and his satire fell without stint or ceremony on all who came short of his ideals. But he was no mere spectator, no ascetic reviler of vices he did not understand. He knew the worst, and knew it from experience. His convivial habits, his love of the good things of this life—especially of the delights of the Mermaid, are often dwelt upon; and we must acknowledge that a strong animal nature was blended in him with an exceptional poetic sensibility and moral delicacy. He was a realist who was not satisfied with reality as he saw it, whether at court or in the stews. His independence of spirit sprang as much from the moral rectitude of his aims as from his early training. He could be courtly, as many of his masques show; but graceful manners were wasted on the charlatans and gulls who form the staple of his plays. His learning was deep, and his intellectual powers exceptional; in these respects

he was a king among his contemporaries, and obviously did not suffer fools gladly. His own character has been drawn by himself in the Horace of *The Poetaster*, Crites of *Cynthia's Revels*, and Asper of *Every Man out of his Humour*. Asper "is of an ingenious and free spirit, eager, and constant in reproof, without fear controlling the world's abuses. One, whom no servile hope of gain, or frosty apprehension of danger, can make to be a parasite, either to time, place, or opinion." If he expressed himself with trenchant roughness, he could answer :

> Who is so patient of this impious world
> That he can check his spirit or rein his tongue ?

He is really an isolated figure in literature. His dramas founded no school ; and if such poets as Herrick and Carew owed something to him they paid him with interest and left him far behind. He cannot be enrolled on the lists of our first-class names in literature ; but he must stand high among the second class.

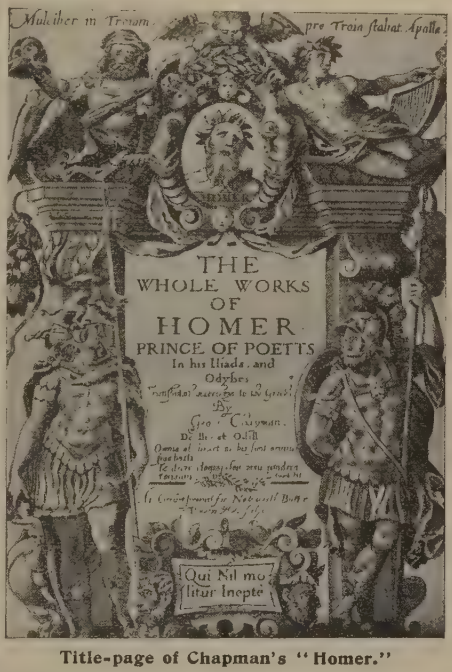
GEORGE CHAPMAN (1559–1634)

Chapman, famous for his translation of Homer, was born at Hitchin, and was educated at Oxford. He was a fine classical scholar, which makes him, like Ben Jonson, a learned poet, especially when he united philosophy with scholarship in his interests.

Poems and Translations: "Iliad" and "Odyssey."—His first poems, *The Shadow of Night*, were printed in 1594, and his first play—a very poor one—was acted in 1596. Like Jonson, he was not appreciated at his own valuation ; he equally disdained the applause of the "unlearned multitude" ; but, not having Jonson's satiric vigour, he consoled himself with his devotion to learning. The fruit of this was the translation of Homer, which occupied his leisure through most of his life. He wrote other poems also, including the fanciful and euphuistic *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595), the conclusion of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598), *The Tears of Peace* (1609), and a dignified funeral song in memory of Prince Henry (1612). One masque of his survives, performed in 1614, but he probably wrote many more, since Jonson bracketed him and Fletcher as his only worthy followers. He wrote plays steadily till his death in 1634.

His poems, save for occasional passages of dignified thought, have no very lively interest ; they are often obscure and difficult, as if there was more in his mind than he was able to express clearly. The Homer is, however, a very different matter, and must be regarded as one of the noblest bequests of Elizabethan literature. The first seven books of the *Iliad* were issued in 1598, but they do not seem to have attracted much notice ; at any rate, the rest was not issued till 1611, and the last twelve books were rushed off in fifteen weeks—a marvellous feat if it is authentic, and one which accounts for the inferiority and slovenliness of that part of the poem.

The *Odyssey* appeared in 1614–15, and the various Homeric fragments in 1624. The *Iliad* was rendered into long rhyming lines of fourteen syllables—a metre which in some respects was admirably chosen. Its best passages are not unworthy of the original. It moves with the rapidity and vigour, energy and spirit, that the work called for, and the story runs on with a good deal of the Homeric charm. Chapman was competent by his life-long study and his high respect for the original to perform the translation. But it is not merely as a translation that his book lives, though it is probably the best verse translation of Homer that has yet been made. It is also a splendid poem, and not unworthy of Keats's praise. Through Chapman's speaking "loud and bold," the lover of poetry who does not read Greek may enjoy something of "the pure serene" of Homer. The *Odyssey*, written in heroic couplets, is hardly less deserving of the same high praise.



Title-page of Chapman's "Homer."

Chapman's Plays.—In his plays Chapman has most of the faults of his poems, but a richer dower of their virtues. He was not a dramatist by nature; his mistress, as his "coronet" of sonnets declares, was Philosophy, and Learning was the mental store upon which he drew. But he had not Jonson's power of observation to give his ideas dramatic vitality. He could not construct a plot, and he could not carry out a dialogue, like that of *Bartholomew Fair* for instance, which had the semblance of real life. In his own day the "proud full sail" of his verse, and its "free and heightened style," received notice and admiration from the judicious. But the speeches are not in character; and in spite of their beauty they fail in dramatic effect. Besides, they readily lose themselves in excess of rhetoric and passion; they bring us back to the worst passages of Marlowe, without his youthful energy and sincerity; and frequently they are obscure. With his studious character and contempt for ordinary humanity, Chapman could not be a great dramatist, and is not.

His first play was a comedy, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596), which, like its successor, *A Humorous Day's Mirth* (1599), is but feeble stuff. On the other hand, *All Fools* (1605) is a really amusing comedy, with sprightly characters, excellent situations, and an ingenious plot. *The Gentleman Usher* (1606) and *Monsieur d'Olive*

(1606) have some good points, but are deficient in construction. After these came the tragedies: *Bussy d'Ambois* (1607), followed in 1613 by a sequel, *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*. Between these we have the double play on a single theme, *The Conspiracy of Byron* and *The Tragedy of Byron* (1608). These plays deal with contemporary French affairs in a strangely tolerant spirit. They are melodramas of blood, with many horrors, much rant and little power of characterization, but with a liberal display of the " full and heightened style."

JOHN MARSTON (?1575–1634)

Romances and Miscellaneous Drama.—Little is known of the life of John Marston, who, more than any other literary figure of his time, drew the contemptuous satire of Jonson. He was born at Coventry about 1575, and educated at Oxford, where he took his degree in 1594. His first appeal to the literary public was through the sensual love-romance *Pygmalion's Image*, in 1598. Its coarseness caused it to meet the censure of Hall, the satirist; consequently in his next work Marston adopted a new attitude, and in *The Scourge of Villainy* himself appears as a violent and bitter satirist. His style drew upon him the severe criticism of Jonson in *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster;* and he united with one of his fellow-victims in *Satiromastix* (1602), a satirical drama in which Jonson himself is roughly but not ineffectively treated. For several years Marston continued to write plays, producing *Antonio and Mellida* (1602), a high-flown tragedy of blood and horrors; *The Malcontent* (1604); *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605); *What You Will* (1607), and other dramas of very small merit. After this he seems to have given up writing; he entered the Church, lived quietly in a country living, and died in 1634.

His Best Plays.—A certain amount of cleverness and wit cannot be denied to Marston, but it is obscured by his violence and his pose. There is a false and insincere ring about his best passages, a forced note, a straining after effect, which vitiates them, and defeats their aim. He was vain, affected, and ambitious; he was aware of his own limitations, but by the vigorous use of high-sounding words he tried to " bounce " the public into taking him seriously as a satirist. In a famous scene of *The Poetaster*, Jonson makes Horace give Crispinus a pill to relieve him of his impurities of diction; and Crispinus vomits a whole succession of Marston's big words, such as inflate, turgidous, ventosity, obcœcate, prorumped, lubrical, and a host of their like, drawn from Marston's works. Of the plays, *Antonio and Mellida* and *The Malcontent* are the best. The former begins fairly well, and has the material of a reasonably pleasant love-story; but the second part is a confusion of melodramatic horrors, incredible ghost scenes, black revenge, rant, and fustian; and what might have been a moving tragedy loses itself in mere foulness and a very revelry of murders. *The Malcontent* also has elements of greatness in its fundamental idea; it is a not unpleasant comedy, with one excellent character in Malevole; but it does not, as

Hazlitt suggested, bring Marston into the sphere of Molière. Both Lamb and Hazlitt were misled by the power and eloquence of Marston's best passages into ranking him far too high. In spite of his cleverness and occasional wit, Marston was too deficient in the sense of proportion and moderation to be a great dramatist. He was guilty of all the romantic excesses and improbabilities at which Jonson railed. Such as he is, however, we may see at the best in *The Malcontent.*

THOMAS DEKKER (*c.* 1570–*c.* 1640)

Dramatic and Descriptive Works.—The life of Thomas Dekker is even more vaguely known than Marston's. There is no record either of his birth or of his death. A hint or two gathered from the diary of Philip Henslowe and from his own plays allow us to make a few assertions of a general kind about him, but no more. He was a Londoner, intimately acquainted by personal experience with the squalid aspects of the courts and taverns; he was perhaps either a tailor or a shoemaker by trade, but an industrious literary hack by profession: neither trade nor profession could keep him from poverty, or, it may be added, from gaol. He was an active collaborator with other dramatists—*e.g.* with Marston in *Satiromastix*, with Middleton in *The Roaring Girl* (1611) and other plays, with Webster in *Northward Ho*, and with Massinger in *The Virgin Martyr* (1622). In all these conjoint efforts, except *Satiromastix*, he probably played the rôle of junior partner; his own work shows that he had a very rudimentary sense of the art of construction, but could impart vigour and vitality to individual scenes, especially those of life in London, and he had a vein of homely pathos and tender sentiment which surprises us when we remember the roughness of his life.

Dekker's Comedies.—His first unaided play, as far as we know, was *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600). This jolly comedy, which "purposed nothing but mirth," certainly fulfils its purpose. It has little or no plot, and its characterization is weak enough; but it is full of hearty fun and rough wit, and gives us a most valuable picture of London life, centring in the career of Simon Eyre the shoemaker, who became Lord Mayor. Jonson has given us a more artistic picture in *Bartholomew Fair;* but Dekker, in spite of the crudeness of his literary methods, has a far greater geniality. Dekker is boisterous and coarse, but he atones for this by his humour, his humanity, his cordial jollity.

His Realism.—Realism is the note of *The Shoemaker's Holiday;* but in *Old Fortunatus* (1600) the romantic influence of Marlowe is strong. The play is very lax in construction, as usual; but apart from this it is almost as great a masterpiece as *Faustus*, the story of which it recalls. It is a combination of morality and masque, rich in passages of real poetic power, containing a number of irrelevant episodes, such as that of the lover Orleans, which redeem themselves by their own

intrinsic beauty. *The Honest Whore* (1604) returned to the realistic method, and in it we are able to see Dekker at his highest. The fine female character of Bellafront is superior to any study of woman in Jonson, and the whole play has been highly praised by Hazlitt. But the naïve sincerity with which Dekker follows the metamorphosis of his heroine must close the play to the modern stage, though its psychological truth and its human sympathies will always keep it a favourite among students of the Elizabethan drama.

His Realistic and Satirical Prose Works.—Dekker is not a great prose writer, but he is a very engaging one. Among his numerous prose books are *The Bachelor's Banquet* (1603), a pleasant satire on "the variable humours of women"; *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), a more ambitious satire, not so skilfully worked out; *The Belman of London* (1608), a grim little book on the seamy side of London life and full of quaint information; and *The Guls Hornboke* (1609), the best and brightest of all, invaluable for its pictures of the various types of gull, for whom the book is humorously written in the guise of a handbook or manual. Just as *Satiromastix* defeated *The Poetaster* by its good nature rather than by any literary superiority, so these little prose books gave no offence and pictured their comic types with pleasant friendliness.

Summary.—Dekker's works are a strange combination of ethical rectitude and crude animal spirits, of a crass realism with an almost lyrical charm of tender feeling, of a noisome squalor with the fragrance of genuine good nature. He was not a great poet, though he has left us a few beautiful lyrics. He will be remembered as the typical Londoner of the Elizabethan period—free and frank, noisy, and not squeamish, either in language or in life, but at the bottom serious, patriotic, and generous.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—Ben Jonson: *Works*, ed. W. Gifford and Cunningham (9 vols., 1875; 3 vols., Chatto, 1876); *Best Plays*, ed. Nicholson and Herford (Mermaid Series, 3 vols., Unwin, 1893–4); *Catiline*, ed. by L. H. Harris (Milford, 1921); *Every Man in his Humour*, ed. by H. H. Carter (Milford, 1922); *English Masques*, ed. H. A. Evans (Blackie, 1897).—Marston, J.: *Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen (3 vols., Nimmo, 1887).—Dekker, T.: *Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen (4 vols., Nimmo, 1887); *Best Plays*, ed. E. Rhys (Mermaid ed., Unwin, 1906).—Gayley, C. M.: *Representative English Comedies* (3 vols., Macmillan, N.Y., 1912–14).

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Chapter 5. POETRY: THE INFLUENCE OF SPENSER

George Gascoigne—Sir Philip Sidney—Thomas Watson—Henry Constable—Thomas Lodge—Giles Fletcher the elder—Barnabe Barnes—Samuel Daniel—Michael Drayton, etc.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE (?1525–77)

Life and Works.—Gascoigne, though he died two years before the publication of *The Shepheardes Calender*, is not a poetic forerunner of Spenser, nor does he, like the writers of *A Mirror for Magistrates*, seek to perpetuate mediæval formulæ of style and sentiment. He strikes out new paths of his own, and so may be included in this section; but his originality is greater than his artistic power, and his work suffers from the waywardness that marred his life. Born in Bedfordshire about 1525, a son of Sir John Gascoigne, he was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and entered Gray's Inn in 1555. After a period of dissipation, which led to his being disinherited, he returned to his studies at the Inn, where in 1566 his *Supposes*, a prose version of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, was presented, as also *Jocasta*, a translation by him and Francis Kinwelmersh of Dolce's *Giocasta*, adapted from the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides. But in 1573 he found it expedient to leave England for a time and to join the forces fighting in the Low Countries. During his absence an undated and anonymous edition of his works was published; a "corrected, perfected, and augmented" edition appeared in 1575 as *The Posies of George Gascoigne, Esquire*. In Flanders Gascoigne seems to have become familiar with the "Prodigal Son" plays, which were so popular there; in 1575 he wrote a "tragicall comedie" of this type, *The Glass of Government*. It was one of the "moral and godly" works with which he sought to redeem his former frailties. These works also included edifying prose tracts, of which the chief was *The Drum of Doomsday*, and his blank-verse satire *The Steel Glass* both written in 1576. On October 7 of the following year he died.

Prose Writings.—Gascoigne's versatile talents showed to greater advantage in drama than in poetry. It was an enduring achievement to write the two earliest prose comedies in English. Though one was a translation and the other a disguised Puritan tract, they are distinguished by the ease and aptness of the dialogue. Another prose romance, *The Pleasant Fable of Ferdinando Jeronimi*, in its sentimental colloquies and the alliterative balance of its style, is a forerunner of *Euphues*. The story is probably based on some incident in Gascoigne's own career, though he avers that it is translated from a tale by "Bartello," an Italian who is not otherwise known. *Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Verse or Rhyme in English*, written for a friend, is the first attempt at a treatise on prosody in the language.

Gascoigne as a Lyrist.—As a lyrist he is of small account, though he has written the charming *Lullaby of a Lover:*

Sing lullaby, as women do,
Wherewith they bring their babes to rest;
And lullaby can I sing too,
As womanly as can the best.
With lullaby they still the child;
And if I be not much beguiled,
Full many a wanton babe have I,
Which must be still'd with lullaby.

and two pleasant pieces in octosyllabic six-lined stanzas, "At Beauty's bar as I did stand," and "Amid my bale I bathe in bliss." His love of experiment did not extend to innovation in lyrical measures. He uses, as a rule, accepted forms, including the "English" sonnet. But he is apparently the inventor of an eleven-lined stanza which he employs in his *De Profundis* and in the verses called "a moonshine banquet" in his prose romance. Here the seven lines of rhyme-royal stanza are followed by four others, rhyming as follows:

And thou (good God) vouchsafe in gree to take,
This woefull plaint
Wherein I faint.
Oh heare me then for thy great mercy's sake.

His Narrative Verse and Satire.—But Gascoigne strikes out for himself in a curious form of novelette in verse, of which *Dan Bartholmew of Bath* is the chief example. The story of Bartholmew's passion for an inconstant beauty is told by the poet, who calls himself "the reporter," in rhyme-royal stanzas, interspersed by the lover's "triumphs" or lamentations in various metres. Bartholmew reappears as the Green Knight in *The Fruit of Fetters*, and both are disguises of Gascoigne himself. He is at his best, however, when he dispenses with mystification, and tells the tale of his own experiences in the *Voyage into Holland* and *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*. The latter is a poem of over 200 stanzas in rhyme-royal, and contains a vivid account of Gascoigne's fortunes in Flanders, preceded by a powerful though too diffuse discourse on the nature of war, "the scourge of God." Incidentally satirical sketches are introduced of various social classes, whose practices encourage strife, or who turn warfare to their own profit. *The Steel Glass* shows kings, soldiers, priests, merchants, peasants, and the rest as they really are, not flattered and idealized as in the crystal glass, which "glimseth brave and bright," wherein all men choose to look. Throughout there are shrewd strokes at the foibles and vices of the age, but excuse is made in the epilogue for shutting the glass before women are seen in it,

Since all the hands, all paper, pen, and ink,
Which ever yet this wretched world possessed,
Cannot describe this sex in colours dew.

As Gascoigne states in the dedication to Lord Wilton, it is "a satire written without rhyme, but I trust not without reason." It is thus, so far as is known, the first original poem written in blank verse.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554–86)

(For Life, see p. 67)

Sidney and Gascoigne.—In several of the fields where Gascoigne had been the first adventurer, Sir Philip Sidney was in the next decade to show high accomplishment. The *Apologie for Poetrie* as a critical treatise; the *Arcadia* as a prose romance intermingled with verse; *Astrophel and Stella* as an imaginative interpretation of Sidney's own love experiences,—all have the "occasional" air of Gascoigne's similar efforts, but they have the authentic stamp of genius.

Penshurst, Kent.

Poems in the "Arcadia."—In the *Arcadia* Sidney's poetic imagination informs the prose rather than the verse, which includes about eighty pieces, ranging in length from the tale of "Strephon and Klaius" in 545 lines to single couplets. Yet it would be a mistake to overlook the varied interest of these pieces, especially from the technical point of view. The young poet, as he strikes off the pages of his romance in desultory fashion for his sister's entertainment, indulges to the full his bent for metrical experiment. Here are the classical measures favoured by the little "Areopagus" of which he and Dyer were the heads—hexameters, elegiacs, sapphics, and the rest. Not even the passionate feeling in the elegiacs, "Unto a caitiff wretch, whom long affliction holdeth," can redeem the laboured artificiality of the whole group.

Metrical Experiments in the "Arcadia."—Scarcely less exotic are some of Sidney's imitations of intricate French or Italian verse patterns. Thus he has examples of the "sestine," a poem in six stanzas, each consisting of six lines, the last words of which are repeated, in varying order, in each stanza, the whole ending with a "tail" of three lines, which contains the six last words. And as if this were not enough in the way of metrical ingenuity, he makes one of the sestines double. Another

elaborate verse-form used several times by Sidney is the "dizaine," a ten-lined stanza, rhyming *a b a b b c a c d d*. Related to this, but with the variation of three six-syllable lines, is the nine-lined stanza of the musical Epithalamium. There are also experiments of a more eccentric type, such as lines ending with an echo, or with an interchange of the words "light" and "dark." And most remarkable of all is the dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorus, which begins with lines ending in triple rhymes, arranged in *terza rima* fashion; suddenly changes to double rhymes, and then to single ones; afterwards continues in apparent blank verse, where, however, the last word of each line rhymes with the last in the second foot of the next; then slides into curiously interlaced five-lined stanzas; and at the end returns to the triple-rhymed *terza rima*. In another shorter dialogue this triple-rhymed *terza rima* and the false blank verse reappear, and elsewhere in the *Arcadia* Sidney uses *terza rima* in its usual English form several times.

Of some of the metres popularized by Wyatt and Surrey, or of older date, he makes surprisingly little use. Poulter's measure comes only once, rhyme-royal twice, and *ottava rima* thrice, though in this metre is written the longest poem in the romance, with its lifelike and amusing account of lovers' manœuvres in the game of barley-break. Another lively tale, the *fabliau* of the husband whose jealousy led to his own undoing, is related in sextains.

Sonnets in the "Arcadia."—The sonnets in the *Arcadia* number nearly twenty, and are for the most part in the "English" form. But Sidney introduces variations, by using sometimes the same rhymes throughout the octave, or even throughout the quatorzain, or by more far-fetched devices. A sonnet on "Night," one of the last in the volume, is in strict Petrarchan form. Apart from form, the sonnets in the *Arcadia* are, as a whole, of the imitative Petrarchan type, playing with "conceits," and decking out sentiment in fanciful embroidery. Even the well-known "My true love hath my heart, and I have his" is only a peculiarly happy example of the type. Other sonnets which show something of the true Sidneian touch are "Lock up, fair lids, the treasure of my heart," "O stealing time, the subject of delay," and the noble *sursum corda*,

> Since Nature's works be good, and death doth serve
> As Nature's work, why should we fear to die?

"Astrophel and Stella."—It is a bewildering change from the languors of Arcady, where "only shadows of wan lovers pine," to the tumultuous riot of passion at white heat in *Astrophel and Stella*. The contrast has been insufficiently noted by those who seek to minimize in this, as in other Elizabethan sonnet-series, the element of authentic personal experience. When Sidney in the opening *Astrophel* sonnet speaks of

Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burned brain,

or makes mock later of those who sing over again "poor Petrarch's long-deceasèd woes," he is describing in effect his own dilettante versifying in the *Arcadia*. Why then should we disbelieve his reiterated cry that it was his tragic love for Stella, and this alone, that dipped his pen in fire?

Sidney and Penelope Devereux.—It is impossible, of course, and for the historian of literature unnecessary, to re-create the story in detail, or to mark the boundaries between fact and "invention." *Astrophel and Stella* did not appear till 1591, and there was no complete and authorized version till 1598. We cannot, therefore, say definitely when or in what order the sonnets and songs contained in it were written, though in Sonnets 40 and 51 there are references to events which are probably to be dated in the earlier part of 1581. We know further that about this period Penelope Devereux, a girl of nineteen, whom her father, the first Earl of Essex, had some time previously destined for the hand of Sidney, was (probably owing to the change in his prospects due to his uncle Leicester's marriage) married to Lord Rich. Sidney's mortification found vent in the two sonnets (24 and 37) in which he plays with deadly bitterness on the name of his successful rival. He is

That rich fool, who by blind Fortune's lot
The richest gem of love and life enjoys,
And can with foul abuse such beauties blot;

while she,

Rich in the riches of a royal hart . . .
Hath no misfortune but that Rich she is.

There is reason for thinking that Sidney had not been an ardent suitor till "by blind Fortune's lot" Stella became the bride of one unworthy of her. Then he understood his own heart, and resolved, in spite of all, to win her for his own. To put any other construction on such plain-spoken sonnets as 14 ("Alas, have I not pain enough, my friend?"), 52 ("A strife is grown between Virtue and Love"), 62 ("Late tired with woe, even ready for to pine"), and 72 ("Desire, though thou my old companion art") is juggling with language, either to support a theory of the "literary" inspiration of Elizabethan love sonnets or to shield Sidney's moral character. Stella confessed that she returned his love, but turned a deaf ear to his pleading. We overhear their whispered dialogue in the ravishing music of the fourth and eighth songs:

Astrophel, said she, my love,
Cease, in these effects, to prove.
. . . . . .
Tyran honour doth thus use thee,
Stella's self might not refuse thee.

After a time, in obedience to her "laws of duty," she denied him her presence. The series closes in deepest gloom, with "most rude Despair" the poet's "daily unbidden guest." In September 1583 he married Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, but such unions in the recoil from a thwarted passion are matters of daily occurrence.[1]

Unique Quality of "Astrophel and Stella."—Lamb therefore showed his wonted penetration when he declared that Sidney's sonnets "were written in the very heyday of his blood," and that they "are not rich in words only, in vague and unlocalized feelings—they are full, material, and circumstantiated." But this alone would not set them beside Shakespeare's, on a different plane from all other Elizabethan sonnet-cycles. Their magical quality is born of their union of hot-blooded passion with super-sensual idealism. While Sidney's love was as far as possible from being "Platonic," in the inept conventional sense of the word, it is drenched in the idealism of "the wisest scholar of the wight most wise" (25). The woman for whom he yearned after the fashion of the sons of men was transfigured and irradiated. Virtue herself takes Stella's shape; in her face, he reads what Love and Beauty be; she "shrines in flesh" a deity; her eyes, "while they make love conquer, conquer love." There is nothing so great or so small that this splendid passion cannot draw it into its flaming orbit, and touch it with consecrating fire. From the transcendental visions of Greek philosophy to the "glorious vanities and gay hyperboles" of the fashionable love-poetry, from grave affairs of state and the ceremonial pomp of the tourney to the ways of a lap-dog or pet bird, there is nothing alien or intractable. Thus this sonnet-cycle has something of the sweep and purgative effect of tragedy. We do not know whether it was by a fine instinct or by a fortunate chance that Sidney's sister, in the folio edition of his works in 1598, allowed *Astrophel and Stella* to end on the note of despairing love, and set apart by themselves twenty-seven "certain sonnets." The two last of these are the fine sonnets, with their cries of self-reproach:

> Desire! Desire! I have too dearly bought
> With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
> And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things.

It is unwarrantable, as Grosart has done, to transfer these two sonnets to the close of *Astrophel and Stella*. Whatever the mood or the occasion that inspired them, "the high Sidneian love" of *Astrophel and Stella* needs no palinode.

[1] The view here taken of the autobiographical basis of *Astrophel and Stella* coincides, in the main, with that set forth in detail by Mr. A. W. Pollard in the Introduction to his edition of the work in 1888. Nothing that has been since written on the subject invalidates, in the opinion of the present writer, Mr. Pollard's general conclusions. But there is a good deal to be said for dating all the sonnets after Stella's marriage; any other theory has to get over, as best it can, the formidable obstacle of Sonnet 24.

THOMAS WATSON (1557–92)

"Hecatompathia."—About the time when Sidney was unpacking his heart in verse, Thomas Watson was writing *Hecatompathia, or Passionate Century of Love*, published in 1582. Watson, who was an accomplished Oxford humanist, had already translated the *Antigone* of Sophocles and the Sonnets of Petrarch into Latin. The *Hecatompathia* contains a hundred "passions," as a rule of eighteen lines each. Each poem has a prose introduction, in which the writer indicates its source. Watson not only drew upon Petrarch and Serafino, and other Italian and French humanists, but upon a varied assortment of classical authors. His work is thus avowedly little more than translation or paraphrase, and the contemporary enthusiasm that it aroused is a signal proof of the indifference of the Elizabethans to "originality," provided that the theme and the treatment were to their liking. Watson was acclaimed because, a quarter of a century after the appearance of *Tottel's Miscellany*, he was the first to publish a cycle of so-called "sonnets," and with scholarly skill and an ear for smooth verse, though without a trace of heart-felt inspiration, to give new and melodious voice to the Italianate love-complaints which Wyatt and Surrey had brought into vogue.

"The Tears of Fancy."—Watson was again indebted to the Italians when he turned Tasso's pastoral drama *Aminta* into Latin hexameters (1585), and issued *Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590), in which he translated the words, chiefly from Italian sonnets, which Luca Marenzio, the Venetian, had set to music. His last work, *The Tears of Fancy*, published posthumously in 1593, is also largely of foreign inspiration, and turns to account many of the well-worn *clichés* of the Continental amorists. Unlike *Hecatompathia* it consists of sixty sonnets, with the normal fourteen lines rhymed after the "English" scheme. But it is probably due to Italian influence that Watson is particularly fond of double rhymes, which give a distinctive character to his quatorzains. It is throughout as a skilful metrician rather than as a poet in the full sense that he has a claim to be remembered.

HENRY CONSTABLE (1562–1613)

"Diana."—It may have been the appearance of *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591 that led to the publication of *The Tears of Fancy*, though there is no apparent connection in technique or otherwise. In any case Sidney's volume gave an unprecedented stimulus to sonneteering in England, and during the next decade one series after another came from the printing-presses. Among the first of these was *Diana*, by Henry Constable, a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, and an ardent Roman Catholic, who became involved in various political plots. *Diana*, as published in 1592, included twenty-three sonnets; it was reissued in 1594, "augmented with divers quatorzains of honourable and learned personages," which brought up the

number of the collection to seventy-six. Constable appears to have borrowed the title of his sonnet-sequence from Desportes, and it has been shown that he is indebted for many of his ideas and images and even lines to French sonneteers.[1] But Constable, unlike Watson, can individualize what he appropriates. We can read with appreciation the sonnet in which he compares himself, wounded by the five ivory arrows of his mistress's hand, to St. Francis, or the lines

> My lady's presence makes the roses red,
> Because to see her lips they blush for shame,

even when we know that the simile comes from Melin de St. Gelais and the conceit from Ronsard. Constable has something of Sidney's power of lifting the merely fanciful or fantastic into the sphere of poetic imagination. Astrophel himself might have written the finely felt sonnet which his admirer prefixed to the edition of the *Apology for Poetry*, in 1595, with its plea for pardon for these belated tears:

> I did not know that thou wert dead before,
> I did not feel the grief I did sustain;
> The greater stroke astonisheth the more,
> Astonishment takes from us sense of pain.
> I stood amaz'd when others' tears begun,
> And now begin to weep when they have done.

THOMAS LODGE (1558–1625)

Life.—Thomas Lodge is less notable than Constable as a sonneteer, though from his versatile gifts he occupies a considerably higher place in literature. Born in Lincolnshire about 1558, and educated at Trinity College, Oxford, he became a physician. But during the earlier part of his career he tried various forms of authorship, with considerable success. As a pamphleteer he wrote, in opposition to Gosson, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-plays* (1580); as a playwright he produced, with Greene, *A Looking-glass for London*, and alone, *The Wounds of Civil War* (both printed in 1594); as a novelist *Forbonius and Prisceria* (1584), *Rosalynde*—written on a sea-voyage—(1590), *A Margarite of America* (1596), and some pseudo-historical romances; and as a poet the narrative verses *Scilla's Metamorphosis* (1589), the sonnet-sequence *Phillis* (1593), and a volume of epistles and satires, *A Fig for Momus* (1595).

Sonnets and Songs.—Lodge's attempts at narrative and satirical verse were not distinguished, and his poetical reputation, with which alone we are here concerned, has rested chiefly on *Phillis* and on the songs scattered through his romances. *Phillis*, in addition to other types of verse, contains forty so-called sonnets, though several of them have less or more than fourteen lines. Recent research has shown that most of these sonnets are close translations of quatorzains by Ronsard, Desportes, Ariosto,

[1] See *Elizabethan Sonnets*, Sir Sidney Lee's Introduction, pp. lxii–iii.

and others.[1] Though he has given no hint of the fact, Lodge is here as unabashed a pickpurse of other men's wits as Watson in his *Hecatompathia*. Such claim as he had established through *Phillis* to poetic invention must be abandoned. But he steals with a *beau geste*, and shows a command of finely modulated and flexible versification. It is to Lodge after all that we owe the caressing charm of

> Ah, pale and dying infant of the spring,
> How rightly now do I resemble thee!

and

> It is not death which wretched men call dying,
> But that is very death which I endure;

and the often quoted:

> Sweet bees have hived their honey on thy tongue,
> And Hebe spiced her nectar with thy breath;
> About thy neck do all the graces throng,
> And lay such baits as might entangle death.

Disguised as a "sonnet" in *Phillis* is the charming song

> Love guards the roses of thy lips,
> And flies about them like a bee,

which in part echoes the lovely madrigal in *Rosalynde:*

> Love on my bosom like a bee
> Doth suck his sweet.

His exquisite lyrics are Lodge's true passport to Parnassus.

GILES FLETCHER THE ELDER (1549–1611)

"Licia."—In the same year as *Phillis* there appeared another cycle of fifty-two sonnets, *Licia*, by Giles Fletcher, who had been a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, had travelled in Muscovy, and written *The Russ Commonweal*. Unlike Lodge he acknowledged on his title-page that his volume was designed "to the imitation of the best Latin poets and others"; and in his dedication to Lady Molineux and his Epistle to the Reader he plainly hinted that his passion was fictitious. Yet, though originals have been found for some of Fletcher's sonnets, there is less that is derivative in them than in many similar contemporary sequences. His chief loan from classical poetry was its mythological machinery, which he handled with something of the grace and deftness of a Greek anthologist or the carver of an antique gem. His most typical sonnets, all in the "English" form, are those which enshrine some Anacreontic episode in which Cupid and Licia are the chief figures. Such quatorzains as those beginning

> Love and my Love did range the forest wild,
> Mounted alike upon swift coursers both;

[1] See *Elizabethan Sonnets*, Sir Sidney Lee's Introduction.

and

> Enamoured Jove, commanding, did entreat
> Cupid to wound my Love, which he denied,

have a true classical quality.

BARNABE BARNES (?1569–1609)

"Parthenophil and Parthenope."—This is the last thing that could be said of the remarkable volume, also published in 1593 by Barnabe Barnes (son of a Bishop of Durham), who was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford; became a friend of Gabriel Harvey; and late in life wrote a tragedy, *The Devil's Charter*, which was performed before James I. and printed in 1607. *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, as the 1593 collection of poems was called, included 105 sonnets, besides numerous madrigals, elegies, odes, and other forms of verse. Barnes was evidently widely read, and owed much to

> the famous Prophets of old Greece,
> Those ancient Roman poets of account. . . .
> And thou, sweet Naso, with the golden verse,
> Whose lovely spirit ravished Cæsar's daughter;
> And that sweet Tuscan, Petrarch, which did pierce
> His Laura with Love Sonnets when he sought her.
>
> *Sonnet 44.*

Classical allusions abound in his poems, and several of the odes are in unrhymed classical metres. There are conventional Italian conceits, and imitations of the "Zodiac" imagery in vogue with French amorists.

Nevertheless *Parthenophil and Parthenope* makes a thoroughly original impression. Barnes is the precursor of Chapman, Donne, and the "Metaphysical" poets. He is one of those who seek to take the heaven of poetry by violence. Beauty of rhythm or of phrase is overborne by a turbulence of thought and passion for which no imagery is too startling or incongruous. Thus the lover, turning phonetician, laments that "lame consonants, of neuter-vowels robbed," cannot alone "make Sorrow's shows":

> Can Liquids make them? I with tears make those!
> But for my tears with taunts and frumps are bobbed.
> Could Mutes procure good words, mute would I be!
> But then who should my Sorrow's image paint?

Or again he applies the scrivener's legal jargon to the unhappy state of his personified Heart:

> "Tush," quoth Parthenope, "before he go,
> I'll be his bail at last, and doubt it not."
> "Why then," said I, "that Mortgage must I show
> Of your true love, which at your hands I got."
> Ay me! She was, and is his bail, I wot:
> But when the Mortgage should have cured the sore,
> She passed it off, by Deed of Gift before.

Mingled with these extravagances there is at times a sensuous richness of phrase, especially in the madrigals, and, more rarely, a true felicity of idea and expression, as in his best-known sonnet, "Ah, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?" Barnes also shows great technical skill in the management of his rhyme schemes, and though his sentiments are conventional, he proved himself an innovator both in form and treatment. It was natural that *Parthenophil and Parthenope* should have an influence that extended, as there is reason to believe, to Shakespeare himself.

SAMUEL DANIEL (1562–1619)

Life.—If Barnes has been rediscovered in recent years, the fame, as a sonneteer, of a more eminent Elizabethan has gone through a startling eclipse. Samuel Daniel was born, probably near Taunton, in 1562, and was educated at Magdalen Hall (now Hertford College), Oxford. After a visit to Italy he became tutor to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and at a later date to Anne Clifford, daughter of Margaret, Countess of Cumberland. After the accession of James I. he received an appointment in connection with the Children of the Queen's Revels, and afterwards became a gentleman of the queen's privy chamber. His later life was mainly spent in catering for the entertainment of the court, till his death at Beckington, in Somerset, in 1619.

"Delia."—It was in 1591 that Daniel, not by his own wish, was first brought before the reading public. When Thomas Newman published his unauthorized edition of *Astrophel and Stella*, he included twenty-eight sonnets and seven songs by "sundry other noblemen and gentlemen." Next year twenty-three of these sonnets reappeared among fifty in a sequence, all in the English form, to which Daniel gave the name of *Delia*. A final augmented edition was issued in 1594. *Delia*, which was dedicated to the Countess of Pembroke, was enthusiastically welcomed, and the praises of contemporaries have been echoed by modern poets and critics. But recent investigation has shown that Daniel is, if possible, an even more barefaced plunderer of Italian and French wares than Lodge. Among those of whom he was a docile transcriber were Petrarch and Tasso, and, more especially, Du Bellay, Ronsard, and Desportes. Even such famous sonnets as "Care-charmer Sleep! Son of the sable Night!" and "If this be love, to draw a weary breath," prove to be closely modelled on foreign originals.[1] Was the author of *The Return from Parnassus* aware of all this when he wrote of "sweet honey-dropping Daniel,"

> Only let him more sparingly make use
> Of others' wit, and use his own the more,
> That well may scorn base imitation.

The discovery that he has lived mainly on a borrowed reputation as a sonneteer has damaged him more than it has done Lodge, because his place was higher. But

[1] See *Elizabethan Sonnets*, Introduction, pp. liii–lix.

as with Lodge, we must still give him the credit of the lyric sweetness of his verse, and the felicity of phrase which has so often added a new grace to his borrowings.

"The Complaint of Rosamond."—While Daniel was turning foreign materials to his own use in the sonnets, he was at the same time openly following an English model in narrative verse. *The Complaint of Rosamond*, published with *Delia* in 1592 and (with twenty-three new stanzas) in 1594, was inspired by the success of Churchyard's poem on another royal paramour:

> Shore's wife is grac'd, and passes for a saint;
> Her legend justifies her foul attaint:
> Her well-told tale did such compassion find
> That she is pass'd, and I am left behind.

But Daniel did not make so sympathetic a figure of his heroine as Churchyard. Nor did he, like Sackville, strike new and arresting music from the well-worn instrument of the rhyme-royal stanza. He makes his finest effects in single lines or couplets, as

> Sweet silent rhetoric of persuading eyes,

or

> When mirthless Thames shall have no swan to sing,
> All Music silent, and the Muses dumb.

"The Civil Wars."—In 1595 Daniel published four books of *The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York*, followed by a fifth in the same year, a sixth in 1602, and in 1609 a seventh and eighth. In its completed form the work covers the period from the minority of Richard II. to the accession and marriage of Edward IV. It is written, probably in imitation of the Italian epics, in *ottava rima*, which has often proved an admirable vehicle of narrative. But Daniel has not the epic genius, and in *The Civil Wars* his muse moves with a pedestrian gait. He is at his best in emotional episodes, as in the interviews between Richard II., riding in disgrace in Hereford's train, and his faithful queen; between the dying Henry IV. and his son; and between Edward IV. and Lady Elizabeth Grey. There are also interesting reflective and moralizing passages, especially that in Book VI., where the new inventions of printing and artillery are classed together as

> two fatal instruments,
> The one to publish, th'other to defend
> Impious contention and proud discontents.

The one, by making all secrets known, encourages the vulgar to "control their betters, censure acts of state"; the other, by equalizing the coward and the valiant, confounds "all th'ancient force and discipline of war." Here speaks the Daniel who had been attached to great households which cherished the traditions of chivalry, and which looked upon statecraft and letters as the monopoly of a select few.

"Musophilus."—But a higher note had been sounded in the poetic dialogue *Musophilus* (1599), where the poet under this name defends the literary art against the attacks of the materialist Philocosmus. He apostrophizes "Heavenly Eloquence":

> Thou that canst do much more with one poor pen
> Than all the pow'rs of princes can effect. . . .
> Should we this ornament of glory, then,
> As th' unmaterial fruits of shades neglect?

And in a panegyric on his native language he foretells, with prophetic vision, its conquest of the new-found lands in the West:

> And who (in time) knows whither we may vent
> The treasure of our tongue? To what strange shores
> This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
> T' enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
> What worlds in th' yet unformed occident
> May come refined with th' accents that are ours?

The same enthusiasm for English speech and its natural modes of expression gives passion and dignity to his prose *Defence of Rhyme* (1602), an effective counterblast to Campion's *Observations on the Art of English Poesy*, in which he advocated the use of classical metres.

"Panegyric" and Masques.—On the accession of James I., Daniel hastened to greet him with a *Panegyric Congratulatory* in *ottava rima*. Though he proclaims that

> It is the greatest glory upon earth
> To be a King,

his tone is far removed from servile adulation. He reminds James that even a ruler by divine right must win for himself the hearts of his subjects:

> God makes thee King of our estates; but we
> Do make thee King of our affection,
> King of our love:

and in words of unconscious irony he predicts that the new monarch will stand on the ancient ways of the commonwealth:

> Thou wilt not alter the foundation
> Thy ancestors have laid of this estate;
> Nor grieve thy land with innovation,
> Nor take from us more than thou wilt collate.

Daniel's dramatic talents, of which he had already given the firstfruits in his classical tragedies *Cleopatra* (1594) and *Philotas*, were more to the taste of James and his consort. In *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604) and *Tethys' Festival* (1610) he tried his hand, not very successfully, at the fashionable entertainment

of the masque. He had more scope for his distinctive gifts in the pastoral tragi-comedies *The Queen's Arcadia* (1605), produced at Christ Church, Oxford, and in *Hymen's Triumph* (1615).

The Epistles.—But now that his sonnets have been proved to shine with borrowed lustre, his poetic reputation must rest chiefly upon his *Epistles* in verse. In them all Daniel's finest qualities are concentrated—his felicitous choice of phrase, his reflective powers, his practised insight into the minds of the " noble dames " of his period. These *Epistles* lack the intimate and spontaneous charm of compositions in a similar kind by Scott or Shelley; in the iron glow of their moral idealism they are the closest Elizabethan counterpart to the Wordsworthian ode, and, in Daniel's own words to the Countess of Bedford, they

> Give the soul the best delight that may
> Encheer it most, and most our spirits inflame
> To thoughts of glory, and to worthy ends.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631)

Earlier Life and Influences.—Michael Drayton, born at Hartshill in Warwickshire in 1563, entered the family of Sir Henry Goodere of Polesworth, not far from Tamworth, as a page. A charming description of his boyhood studies and his ambition to become a poet is given in his *Elegy* to his friend Henry Reynolds. He fell under the spell not only of classic and neo-classic pastoralists, Virgil and Mantuan, but of the ballad minstrelsy chanted by " John Hewes " to his lyre,

> Which oft at Polesworth by the fire
> Hath made us gravely merry.

And there were other inspiring influences in " the happy and generous family of the Gooderes." Sir Henry had two daughters, Frances, who married a cousin, and Anne, who in 1595 became the wife of Sir Henry Rainsford. There is strong evidence that Anne was " Idea," who gives her name to the poet's first pastorals, *Idea, the Shepherd's Garland* (1593), and his first sonnets, *Idea's Mirror* (1594).[1] But however deep Drayton's feeling for Anne Goodere may have been, it did not prevent a lifelong intimacy with her and her husband after their marriage.

Another more illustrious patroness was Lucy Harrington, who in December 1594 became Countess of Bedford. Shortly before her marriage Drayton had dedicated to her his *Legend of Matilda*, and his *Endimion and Phœbe* (1595) was prefaced by a sonnet in which she is hailed as " Great Lady, essence of my chiefest good." *Mortimeriados* (1596), *The Legend of Robert* (1596), and *England's Heroical Epistles* (1597) are also dedicated to her.

Drayton had apparently come to London early in 1591, and by 1598 he had won

[1] See *Michael Drayton*, by Oliver Elton, pp. 15–23.

a high reputation both as a poet and a man. Francis Meres quotes with approval the epithet "golden-mouthed" which had been applied to him, and speaks of him as "a man of virtues and well-governed carriage, which is almost miraculous among good wits of this declining and corrupt time." But it is doubtful if he had prospered financially. We find him from 1597 to 1602 doing theatrical hack-work for Henslowe. Among his earlier associates were Dekker and Munday, and in 1602 Webster and Middleton. Of the twenty pieces in which he had a share, only Part I. of *Sir John Oldcastle* has survived. The stage was not to be Drayton's field of fame.

Title-page of Drayton's "Poly-Olbion."

Later Years.—On the accession of James he was, like Daniel, quick to welcome him with a *Gratulatory Poem*, but seems to have incurred the reproach of indecent haste:

> It was my hap before all other men
> To suffer shipwreck by my forward pen
> When King James entered, at which joyful time
> I taught his title to this isle in rhyme.

But Sir Walter Aston, "a knight of the new creation," made him one of his esquires—a style which he henceforth adopts on his title-pages. It may have been through Aston that Drayton obtained the goodwill of Prince Henry, who granted him an annuity of £10 (continued after his death by his brother, Prince Charles), and accepted in 1612 the dedication of the First Part of *Poly-Olbion*. Many of the copies of this vast work were left in the booksellers' hands, and, as we learn from the correspondence between Drayton and Drummond of Hawthornden, which began in 1618, he tried to arrange for the publication of the Second Part in Edinburgh. But nothing came of this, and both parts were brought out by the original publishers in 1622. Though Drayton never met Drummond, he was grateful to him for his good offices, and called him, in his *Elegy* to Reynolds (1627),

> My dear Drummond, to whom much I owe
> For his much love.

In the same poem he mentions the two Beaumonts (Francis and Sir John) and William Browne as the "dear companions" of his later years. But neither through friends nor patrons does he seem ever to have gained a competence

When he died at the end of 1631, he is said by a contemporary to have had no more than "about some five pounds lying by him." He was buried in the Abbey, and the Countess of Dorset, to whom he had dedicated his *Divine Poems* in his last volume (1630), paid for the monument over his grave.

Early Poems.—Drayton's first venture, *The Harmony of the Church* (1591), was for some unknown reason suppressed. In his next volume, *Idea, the Shepherd's Garland*, Drayton exchanged the inspiration of *Tottel's Miscellany* for that of *The Shepheardes Calender*. In nine eclogues—a sacrifice to the nine Muses—Rowland follows in the footsteps of Colin. He laments his miseries and the pangs of unrequited love; he sings the praises of "Idea," of Beta (Queen Elizabeth), and Pandora (the Countess of Pembroke); he mourns Elphin (Sir Philip Sidney).

"Idea's Mirror."—In the last decade of the 16th century any poet with a love-plaint to utter became sooner or later a sonneteer, and in 1594 Drayton published *Idea's Mirror, Amours in Quatorzains*. Here again "Idea" is used to designate the lady of the singer's worship, and she is associated with the river Ancor. The original fifty-two sonnets expanded into over a hundred, of which some sixty were included in the final recension.[1] They thus represent the work of a quarter of a century, and throughout the period they are curiously unequal. Often Drayton, in his own phrase, seems to "loosely trifle in this sort"; the thought is thin, and the imagery lacks lustre. Then in a moment his imagination glows, or his emotion kindles, and the verse vibrates with strange, sudden music. At first it had the sweet cadence of Daniel, as in the beautiful *Amour* of 1594, which for some reason was omitted from the later editions:

> If chaste and pure devotion of my youth,
> Or glory of my April-springing years,
> Unfeigned love in naked simple truth,
> A thousand vows, a thousand sighs and tears:

or in another to the river Ancor, retained through all the issues,

> Where nightingales in Arden sit and sing
> Amongst the dainty dew-impearlèd flowers.

It is a subtler, more troubled melody that has crept into such new sonnets of 1599 as

> An evil spirit your beauty haunts me still
> Wherewith, alas, I have been long possest,
> Which ceaseth not to tempt me to each ill,
> Nor gives me once but one poor minute's rest:

or

> Love in a humour played the prodigal
> And bade my senses to a solemn feast.

[1] See Appendix A to *Michael Drayton*, by O. Elton.

Even to the close Drayton was to find new stops in his instrument. He retained throughout the recensions the powerful 1599 sonnet, "Whilst thus my pen strives to eternize thee," but it is eclipsed by the sombre magnificence of the two opening quatrains, on the same theme, of one of the seven sonnets added in 1619:

> How many paltry, foolish, painted things
> That now in coaches trouble every street
> Shall be forgotten, whom no poet sings,
> Ere they be well wrapped in their winding sheet,
> Where I to thee eternity shall give
> When nothing else remaineth of these days,
> And Queens hereafter shall be glad to live
> Upon the alms of thy superfluous praise.

Had the remaining six lines been equal to these, the handful of 1619 sonnets would have included two masterpieces instead of one. It is the sustained perfection of "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," that makes it supreme among Drayton's quatorzains. In this glorious transfiguration of the English temper that clasps hope to the very heart of despair, the Renaissance sonnet in its English form breathes its "latest breath."

> Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part—
> Nay, I have done, you get no more of me;
> And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
> That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
> Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
> And when we meet at any time again,
> Be it not seen in either of our brows
> That we one jot of former love retain.
> Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
> When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
> When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
> And Innocence is closing up his eyes,—
> Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
> From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

Narrative Poems: "The Barons' Wars."—Drayton's historical poems had begun with the *Legends* of historical personages, *Piers Gaveston* (1593), *Matilda* (1594), and *Robert, Duke of Normandy* (1596). Undeterred by Marlowe's consummate dramatic handling of the subject, he returned to the troubles of Edward II.'s reign in the heroic poem *Mortimeriados*, in rhyme-royal stanzas, afterwards remodelled as *The Barons' Wars* in *ottava rima* (1603). Apart from meeting the challenge of Marlowe's masterpiece, in *The Barons' Wars* he had to struggle against more than the normal difficulties of an historical epic. In the conflict between Edward and his peers there were no grand issues, nor arresting crises, but he paints the guilty loves of Mortimer and the queen with sumptuous rhetoric. This reaches its climax in the gorgeous description of the chamber in Nottingham Castle adorned with realistic mythological vignettes, where the pair are surprised at midnight by Prince Edward. Drayton, the moralist and the historian, is forgotten as we watch

the queen lay her fingers, "the god's pure sceptres and the darts of love," on her paramour's cheek, and hear them comment on that painting of Phaeton in which Mortimer sees, with unconscious prophecy, the emblem of his own fate:

> "What though," quoth he, "he madly did aspire,
> And his great mind made him proud Fortune's thrall,
> Yet in despite, when she her worst had done,
> He perished in the chariot of the sun."

"England's Heroical Epistles" and Odes.—With *The Barons' Wars* Drayton reissued *England's Heroical Epistles*, which had first appeared in 1597. The model of these *Epistles* is Ovid's *Heroides*, but the subject-matter and spirit of the *Epistles* are thoroughly national. Nowhere, with but one exception, was Drayton so happily inspired in his handling of patriotic themes.

That exception was, of course, *The Ballad of Agincourt*, first published among his odes in *Poems Lyrical and Pastoral* (1606). In the ballad, as in Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, Elizabethan patriotism finds its noblest accent in glorifying the triumph of English arms, when France, not Spain, was the hereditary foe. In the ode *To the Virginian Voyage* it is "the brave heroic minds" of contemporary England whom the poet bids God-speed on their great adventure westwards to win "Earth's only Paradise."

"Poly-Olbion."—Drayton would have done better both for his contemporary reputation and his permanent place in letters had he worked further this rich vein, instead of pursuing with fanatical ardour the stupendous task upon which he had been engaged (as we know from Francis Meres) at least as early as 1598. In *Poly-Olbion* he had planned a comprehensive poem which would preserve from the arch-enemy Time the glories of his beloved country. In this "Chorographical description of all the tracts, rivers, mountains, forests, and other parts of this renowned isle of Great Britain, with intermixture of the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, rarities, pleasures, and commodities of the same," he relies chiefly upon Camden's *Britannia* and other bookish sources, but he is too independent of temper and, in a sedate way, too impassioned with his theme, to be ever a mere plagiarist; his submerged poetic imagination rises at intervals above the surface.

Drayton's Last Poems.—It is characteristic of the curious resilience that mingles with the toughness of Drayton's poetic fibre that he was not exhausted by *Poly-Olbion*, but put forth in 1627 a volume containing some of his sprightliest and most graceful verse. Among the *Elegies*, which are chiefly epistles to friends written in decasyllabic couplets with well-bred, familiar ease, that to Henry Reynolds is the most interesting, with its reminiscences (already quoted) of his youth, and its acute appreciation of English poets from Chaucer to Browne. In the same metre is *The Mooncalf*, an ungainly exercise in satire—the only field in which Drayton had consistently failed. In the more genial art of burlesque he triumphs with *Nymphidia*, the mock-heroic

fairy poem in which Oberon and Mab, with her *cavaliere servente* Pigwiggin, are not the ethereal king and queen of shadows as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but are drawn in sharp outline to the scale of their miniature world. We are almost as far from reality in *The Shepherd's Sirena* and *The Quest of Cynthia*, where Drayton returns to pastoral, not in the semi-Spenserian vein of *The Shepherd's Garland*, but in the more rarefied atmosphere of the pure love-idyll. This is also mainly true of *The Muses' Elizium*, published in Drayton's last volume (1630), together with three *Divine Poems*, wherein after forty years he returns to the Old Testament whence he had taken the material for his first publication. But the metre is now the decasyllabic couplet, in which he is the forerunner of Waller and Denham, not the fourteener, in which he looked back to Surrey and Grimald. Drayton links the poetic fashions of the courts of Henry VIII. and Charles I.; there is scarcely any form current between these limits that he has not brought within his ambit.

SONG-BOOKS AND MISCELLANIES

Yet there is one exquisite gift, the birthright of a host of lesser Elizabethans, that Drayton did not share. In the song-books and miscellanies of the period, as modern investigation has shown, there is to be found a wealth of lyrical verse, so filmy in texture, so flute-like in tone, that it seems scarcely to be the outcome of conscious art. The song-books contain, as a rule, "ayres" or madrigals. Among the most important are those of William Byrd, John Dowland, Thomas Campion, Thomas Morley, and Thomas Weelkes. Campion (1567–1620) was a poet, critic, and writer of masques as well as a musician, and his various *Books of Ayres* (1601, 1612, 1617, and 1618) include lyrics from his own pen in the most varied metrical forms, as

> When to her lute Corinna sings
> Her voice revives the leaden strings,

or

> Come, O come, my life's delight,
> Let me not in languor pine.

Other of the song-books contain settings of lyrics by prominent courtiers like Sir Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke), and Sir Walter Raleigh, or by others unknown to fame, who could throw off, apparently at will, these delightful improvisations.

Many of the poems in the song-books appear, without their accompanying tunes, in the miscellanies that followed in the wake of Tottel's successful venture. The most important are *A Handfull of Pleasant Delights* (1584), *The Phœnix Nest* (1593), *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599), *England's Helicon* (1600), *England's Parnassus* (1600), and *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1602). They contain, of course (with characteristic Elizabethan disregard of copyright), much that had already appeared under authors' names; but even in the case of well-known writers like Lodge, Raleigh, and Munday, they give us charming lyrics which otherwise would have been unknown. Lesser

men like the Earl of Oxford, Nicholas Breton, and Richard Barnfield, owe most of their reputation to their inclusion in these miscellanies, while other writers of delightful verse are concealed under "A. W.," "Ignoto," or "Anon." Here is the true Elizabethan Arcadia, the "most pleasant downs" of Drayton's vision "where harmless shepherds are, some exercising their pipes, some singing roundelays to their grazing flocks." But this delicate pagan carolling was silenced by the clang of civil strife, and in Drayton's own Jacobean and Caroline lyrics we hear already the new note of the new age.

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Chapter 6. THE PROSE-WRITERS

The Novelists : Greene, Lodge, Nash, Dekker, Breton, etc.—**The Pamphleteers :** Martin Marprelate—Great Prose : Hooker, Bacon, Raleigh, the Authorized Version—Translators, Historians, Travellers

Development of Prose.—The work that told most on the evolution of modern prose was performed, not by the greater writers, Hooker, Bacon, and Raleigh, but by a more popular class, the story-tellers and those writers of nondescript miscellanies whom we should now describe, not as pamphleteers, but by the rough and ready name of journalists. The demands of narrative, argument, or satire, appealing to the half-educated ear, called forth, in this and the subsequent century, a lighter and more direct style, that eventually led to the entirely modern prose of Defoe, Addison, and Swift.

THE ELIZABETHAN NOVEL

Foreign Influences.—Those novels and stories that had for long the chief vogue were not English in origin, but translated from Italian, Spanish, or French, in collections usually comprising others, more or less original, closely imitating these models. Before Pettie's *Pallace*, there were Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566–7), Fenton's *Tragicall Discourses* (1567) from Bandello, and a rendering of Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1565). In 1587 a certain B. Yong translated Boccaccio's *Amorous Fiametta ;* but the *Decameron* itself was not turned into English till 1620, through a French version. Fortescue's *Foreste, or Collection of Hystories doone out of Frenche*, (1571) gave a miscellaneous collection of tales written originally in Spanish,[1] and translated into Italian, from which they were put into French. Similarly, Barnaby Rich's *Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581) came from the French of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, and partly through this medium from Bandello ; and there were stories available for the dramatists from Ser Giovanni, Straparola, Montemayor, as well as much older stories from Heliodorus and the distant sources of the mediæval *Gesta Romanorum*. Anthony Munday (1553–1633) not only wrote a complementary piece to *Euphues* in his *Zelauto, the Fountain of Fame* (1580), but made a business of translation from French, Spanish, and Italian, producing full-length renderings of *Palmerin*, *Amadis*, and *Primaleon of Greece*, those enormous romances of an obsolete chivalry.

It was not till the early 17th century that the wholesale translation of the Spanish picaroon stories began ; but as early as 1576 David Rowland did a version of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, and that strange production, half comedy half novel, *The Celestina*, was licensed in 1598. To what extent an early novel of a picaresque cast like Nash's

[1] Pedro Meria's *Silva de varia leccion.*

Unfortunate Traveller (1594) was indebted to Spanish novels is doubtful. But though the debt to Italian and French story-tellers is the most striking and the most easily traceable in the dramatists, the foreign influence on our writers of fiction, in bringing in a new fashion of plot and new sentiments and traditions, is not a whit less considerable.

THE PAMPHLETEERS AND STORY-TELLERS

ROBERT GREENE (*c.* 1560–92)

A short-lived but most prolific author, Robert Greene, followed Lyly's style and the model of pastoral romance set by Sidney in a number of love-stories, of which one, *Pandosto, or Dorastus and Fawnia*, gave Shakespeare materials for *The Winter's Tale;* and then began a series of nondescript works, half novel and half descriptive article, which afford vivid glimpses of the seamy side of Elizabethan life. His *Mamillia: a Mirrour or Looking-glasse for the Ladies of Englande* (1580–3), and *Euphues his Censure to Philautus* (1587), are efforts in the euphuist manner. Between these he published a number of didactic works, like *The Myrrour of Modestie*, which tells of Susannah and the Elders, *Morando, the Tritameron of Love*, a dialogue, and two collections of tales, *Penelope's Web* and *Perimedes the Blacksmith*. Penelope and her handmaids discourse of love and constancy, and *Perimedes* is as pure and idyllic in sentiment as Greene's life was apparently the reverse. *Pandosto* (1588) is a pastoral based on a Polish tale. Its euphuistic style may be judged from the following extract:

> How art thou pestered, Pandosto, with fresh affections, and unfit fancies, wishing to possess with an unwilling mind and a hot desire, troubled with a cold disdain! shall thy mind yield in age to that thou hast resisted in youth? Peace, Pandosto; blab not out that which thou mayest be ashamed to reveal to thyself. Ah, Fawnia is beautiful, and it is not for thine honour, fond fool, to name her that is thy captive, and another man's concubine. Alas, I reach at that with my hand which my heart would fain refuse; playing like the bird Ibis in Egypt, which hateth serpents, yet feedeth on their eggs. Tush, hot desires turn oftentimes to cold disdain: love is brittle, where appetite, not reason, bears the sway: king's thoughts ought not to climb so high as the heavens, but to look no lower than honour: better it is to peck at the stars with the young eagles, than to prey on dead carcasses with the vulture: 'tis more honourable for Pandosto to die by concealing love, than to enjoy such unfit love.

Menaphon: Camillas Alarum to slumbering Euphues in his melancholie Cell at Silexedra (1589) and *Philomela: the Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale* (1592) are also euphuist romances, laden with the same ideal sentiment, and decked out with the fashionable embellishments of pastoral scenery.

Greene's Realistic Tracts.—Meanwhile, besides more collections of moral maxims, dialogues, and didactic tales, Greene had begun his series of pamphlet-novels, giving a vivid picture of bohemianism and profligacy, the squalid rascalities of town and tavern, and characters of the shadiest tint. *Greenes Mourning Garment, given him by Repentance at the Funerals of Love*, and *Greenes Neuer too Late, or a*

Powder of Experience (1590), are mixtures of alleged personal reminiscence and an undetermined portion of fiction, professedly intended as a warning to youthful gentlemen. There followed some half-dozen pamphlets describing the ways of sharpers, courtesans, and swindlers, who robbed and cheated and laid snares for country folk in London. The *Notable Discovery of Coosnage* (1591), *A Disputation between a He Conny-Catcher and a She Conny-Catcher*, *The Blacke Bookes Messenger*, and *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592) are delineations of low life and roguery, or satires of social vices and affectations, cautioning the unwary, extolling the virtues and respectability of honest tradesmen, preaching with apparent sincerity the evils of folly and the grace of repentance, and genuinely inspired with democratic class-feeling. Greene's last works were, again, according to his asseverations, autobiographical. But this wholesale book-maker was unquestionably a poser and almost certainly a wholesale plagiarist. Most people remember his *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance* for the famous allusion to "Shake-scene." (See *ante*, p. 112.) This and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*, also written on his death-bed, give a lurid account of his own sinful life and exhort his friends to repentance.

THOMAS LODGE (*c.* 1558–1625)

Belonging to the same class as Greene's sentimental idylls were most of the stories of Thomas Lodge (see p. 140), who published *The Delectable Historie of Forbonius and Prisceria*, a thin euphuistic pastoral, the year after *Mamillia*. His most pleasing work was *Rosalynde, or Euphues Golden Legacie, found after his Death in his Cell at Silexedra* (1590), in which he retold the old English tale of *Gamelyn*, and provided a plot, and figures that required only to be developed into characters, for Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Lodge's repetition of the Lylian antitheses, zoological similes, and parallelism of sentences, is closer than usual in the chapter entitled "Sir John of Bordeaux' Legacy he gave to his Sons."

> Climb not, my sons: aspiring pride is a vapour that ascendeth high, but soon turneth to a smoke; they which stare at the stars stumble upon the stones; and such as gaze at the sun (unless they be eagle-eyed) fall blind. Soar not with the hobbie, lest you fall with the lark, nor attempt not with Phaeton, lest you drown with Icarus. Fortune when she wills you to fly, tempers your plumes with wax; and therefore either sit still and make no wing, or else beware the sun, and hold Daedalus' axiom authentical (medium tenuere tutissimum).

Lodge also wrote two quasi-historical novels, *Robin the Diuell*, a life of Robert, second Duke of Normandy, and *William Longbeard*, which tells in a rollicking vein of the exploits of William Fitzosbert against Norman oppressors in the time of Richard I. *Euphues Shadow* (1592) and *A Margarite of America* (1596) return to euphuism and the Arcadian style.

THOMAS NASH (1567–1601)

Thomas Nash, like Greene an alumnus of St. John's College, Cambridge, and very like him too in his short and merry life, marked by at least one term of imprisonment and divers fits of repentance, wrote pamphlets that are more successful in sketching London life and character than Greene's; he may have been the author of some of the best work of the opposite side in the Marprelate controversy; he also wrote a novel that seems reminiscent of *Lazarillo*, and is certainly the first regular picaroon story in English. His *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589) was followed by *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Divell* (1592), in which, among other results, he got himself a name "Pierce Pennilesse" that stuck, and trod on the susceptibilities of Gabriel Harvey, the Cambridge scholar, with whom ensued an embittered controversy. *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* (1593) is, like so many of Greene's pamphlets, a picture of loose life in London, with the same kind of dubious contrition and denunciation of immorality, and some witty satire. In *The Terrors of the Night* (1594) his theme is ghosts and superstitions. The uproarious *Have with you to Saffron-Walden* (1596) winds up the conflict with Harvey, who, however, emitted a feeble retort. In *Lenten Stuffe* (1599) Nash lets himself go in a jovial account of Yarmouth and the herring industry. *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton* (1594), is a combination of rogue-story and travel-book, in which an English page has rambling adventures all over Europe, affording Nash opportunity for accounts of famous cities in Germany, France, and Italy, especially the last, that "hell of iniquity." Historical characters, such as Surrey, Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, and the magician Cornelius Agrippa, figure in the story; a story of sheer sensation, aided by the introduction of actual events.

But the book is far from succeeding in all that it attempts. The most realistic of Elizabethan novels, it nevertheless shows how difficult it was as yet to blend artistically the actual and the imaginative. This, of course, is the common defect of Elizabethan fiction. The stories that have most intrinsic charm, like the pastoral romances, are attempts to put what is by nature a poetic story into a prose form. They are the posthumous issue of the dead and gone romances of the Middle Ages. Those, on the other hand, that are most suggestive of developments to come, fail to divest themselves of the old cumbersome forms. To say this is not to belittle the merits of the interesting novels under review, to deny that they anticipated and exercised some influence on later fiction, or to affirm a complete break of continuity in the development of prose fiction. As a contemplative and analytical portrayal of life, *Euphues* prefigures the modern novel; but it does this ineffectively, and its style marks it, as surely as the *Arcadia* is marked, as a late attempt to reinvigorate an obsolete genre. What was effete had to be abandoned, and a clear new start made by Defoe, before the combination of philosophy and realism attempted by Lyly could be vitalized and made effective by Fielding. Of all Elizabethan attempts at the novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller*

does at any rate show the nearest approximation to future developments. It almost found out the road, and got some distance in the right direction, in spite of obstacles that were yet to be cleared away.

His Style.—Nash was a writer who cared more for vigour than elegance. He gave up euphuism after his early works, and tried boldly to fit his manner to the matter. More so even than Greene and Dekker, Nash writes novels in the style of a pamphleteer. He had an instinctive fondness for alliteration, compound epithets, and the impassioned style of narrative and description: he was always in a state of furious excitement;—this tirade is his description of the coming of the plague at Rome:

> So it fell out, that it being a vehement hot summer when I was a soiourner there, there entred such a hotspurd plague as hath not been heard of: why it was but a word and a blow, Lord haue mercie vpon vs, and he was gone. . . . To smell of a nosegay, that was poysond: and turne your nose to a house, that had the plague, it was all one. The clouds like a number of cormorants, that keepe their corne till it stinke and is mustie, kept in their stinking exhalations, till they had almost stifled all Romes inhabitants.

In spite of the vehemence of feeling that clouds the writer's vision, there is in such passages as this, and in the rest of Nash, Greene, and Dekker's pamphlets, with their quaint jumble of story and descriptive article, a much nearer approach to the literature of realism than in any of the euphuistic romances.

THOMAS DEKKER (*c.* 1570–1640)

The latest of the group is the author of a batch of pamphlets in the style of Greene's and Nash's, Thomas Dekker, the author of *The Batchelors Banquet*. Dekker's prose was not equal to his work as a poet and dramatist, but in this free adaptation of the famous and much-translated satire *Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage*, and in *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606) and *The Guls Hornboke* (1609), he produced some good racy realism and vigorous satire of the conny-catching type. Here is a specimen from the last-mentioned, an ironical book of directions for the behaviour of the young man about town, said to have been begun as an adaptation of Dedekind's *Grobianus:*

How a young Gallant should behave himselfe in an Ordinary.

> Being arrived in the roome, salute not any but those of your acquaintance: walke up and downe by the rest as scornfully and as carelessly as a Gentleman-Usher: select some friend (having first throwne off your cloake) to walke up and downe the room with you, let him be suited if you can, worse by farre than your selfe, he will be a foyle to you: and this will be a meanes to publish your clothes better than a Powles, a Tennis-court, or a Playhouse: discourse as lowd as you can, no matter to what purpose if you but make a noise, and laugh in fashion, and have a good sower face to promise quarrelling, you shall bee much observed.—*The Guls Hornboke*, v.

OTHER NOVELISTS

The rest of the Elizabethan group of novelists are of minor importance Nicholas Breton (?1545–?1626) wrote *The Miseries of Mamillia* and *The Strange Fortunes of Two Excellent Princes* (1600), novels after the style of Greene. He was also the author of an angling idyll in prose, *Wit's Trenchmour*, and of a number of poems of moderate desert. More high-flown than Greene's but extremely popular, especially in abridged form as chap-books, were Emanuel Ford's *Parismus, the renouned Prince of Bohemia* (1598) and its sequel *Parismenos*. Ford also copied the *Amadis* style in *Ornatus and Artesia* and *Montelion, Knight of the Oracle*. A more interesting writer was Thomas Deloney, silk-weaver of Norwich, who wrote ballads, and then turned to prose tales, the best of which is *Thomas of Reading, or the Sixe Worthie Yeomen of the West*, in which facts about certain noted master-clothiers, with a good deal of local colour pertaining to the customs and certain well-known members of the craft, are combined with a tragic love-tale of Robert, Duke of Normandy. The supposed time is the reign of Henry I.; but anachronisms abound, and it is only as a picture of Elizabethan manners that the work can be claimed as a realistic novel.

THE MARTIN MARPRELATE CONTROVERSY

Origins.—At the height of the struggle with Catholic Spain one of the bitterest of the many controversies between the Puritans and the high Anglicans was yielding a crop of literature, pamphlets in the proper sense of the term, that are among the best examples of the species in the language. It has been noticed how the use of prose for the purposes of straightforward narrative and realistic description helped to free it from the trammels of a Latinized syntax and the affectations of euphuism. Printed controversy afforded a discipline as salutary, and elicited a clear, terse, business-like style fitted for many purposes, exposition, reasoning, irony, and also for the most truculent mockery and buffoonery.

The Puritans and Episcopacy.—It is not necessary here to go into the rights and wrongs of the case, except to say that in this particular phase of the long-standing quarrel the Puritans, partly through the tactlessness of their opponents, had much the best of it argumentatively, and managed to show themselves in the light of victims to brute force and advocates of a tolerance to which they really had little claim. A short sketch of the rise and progress of the Marprelate conflict will suffice to show the literary conditions. The ancient strife, as old at least as Wyclif's time, broke out into a furious attack on episcopacy and a violent defensive on the orthodox side through the repressive policy of Archbishop Whitgift, who succeeded the easy-going Grindal in 1583, and speedily obtained a decree from the Star Chamber giving a censorship of all publications and control of the printing presses to himself and the Bishop of London. This arbitrary measure,

and the severe penalties threatened against any expression of heretical views, stirred the indignation of the Puritans, and a ponderous and laboured treatise directed against them by John Bridges, Dean of Sarum, *A Defence of the Government established in the Church of England*, gave an invitation to attack.

Opening of the Controversy.—In April 1588 a pamphlet entitled *The State of the Church of England*, but more generally known as *Diotrephes*, opened the controversy, and struck the keynote for the series of dialogues, derisive tirades, and mixtures of argument and raillery that followed. It was a dialogue in which the Anglican bishop Diotrephes, a papist, a usurer, and a publican, all four drawn in the most unfavourable colours, discuss plans for putting down objectors to their corrupt schemes. Its author was the scholarly John Udall, incumbent of Kingston-on-Thames, who was also probably responsible for *A Dialogue concerning the Strife of the Church*, issued in 1584 from the press of Robert Waldegrave, a Puritan printer. For the unlicensed publication of *Diotrephes* and of another tract, the Welshman John Penry's *Exhortation*, Waldegrave's house was raided by the authorities, and his press, type, and copies of *Diotrephes* were seized. Waldegrave made off with what type he could save, and taking refuge in the houses of Puritan gentlemen in the country, he issued a rapid succession of tracts from the hands of Udall, Penry, and Job Throckmorton, the last two of whom, either singly or jointly, are to be identified with the redoubtable Martin Marprelate.

The Marprelate Tracts.—The first Martin Marprelate tract was *The Epistle*, issued in October or November 1588. It promised a refutation of the Dean of Sarum's treatise, but for the present merely set forth the grievances of the Puritans, and retailed a number of absurd or scandalous anecdotes about Whitgift, Aylmer, Bishop of London, and Cooper of Winchester, said to have been collected by a deceased Puritan, John Field. The full title of *The Epistle*, like those of the other tractates, is a pamphlet in itself:

> Oh read over D. John Bridges, for it is a worthy worke: Or an epitome of the fyrste Booke of that right worshipfull volume, written against the Puritaines, in the defence of the noble cleargie, by as worshipfull a prieste, John Bridges, Presbyter, Priest or elder, doctor of Diuillitie, and Deane of Sarum. Wherein the arguments of the puritans are wisely prevented, that when they come to answere M. Doctor, they must needes say something that hath bene spoken. Compiled for the behoofe and overthrow of the Parsons, Fyckers, and Currats that have lernt their Catechismes, and are past grace: by the reverend and worthie Martin Marprelate gentleman, and dedicated to the Confocation house. The Epitome is not yet published, but it shall be when the Byshops are at conuenient leysure to view the same. In the meane time, let them be content with this learned Epistle. Printed oversea, in Europe, within two furlongs of a Bounsing Priest, at the cost and charges of M. Marprelate, gentleman.

The next issue from the vagabond press was *The Epitome*, which makes game of the Dean of Sarum's treatise, and vehemently attacks Bishop Aylmer. This was answered, laboriously and ineffectively, by Bishop Cooper, in *An Admonition to the People of England*. Martin replied from Coventry in a broadside, *Minerall Conclu-*

sions, travestying Cooper's arguments, with others alleged to be held by other dignitaries of the Church, which was followed up by a more trenchant rejoinder, *Hay any Worke for Cooper?* (a London street-cry). This was a lengthy work, containing a good deal of serious reasoning, long passages of ridicule, and inexhaustible punning allusions to barrels, tubs, hoops, and anything else that fitted the bishop's name.

Soon after this exploit, Waldegrave gave up the struggle and removed to the Continent; but an inferior printer was found, and even when one press was seized near Manchester, another continued its work at Wolston, near Coventry. *Theses Martinianæ or Martin Junior* was followed by *The Just Censure and Reproofe of Martin Junior*, and this by *The Protestation of Martin Marprelat*, the seventh and last of the extant Martin Marprelate tracts. It appeared about October 1589. Udall was thrown into prison the following January, sentenced to death, but pardoned, and died soon after. Penry also was arrested, and in 1593 was hanged. Throckmorton managed to clear himself, though probably the greatest culprit of the three.

Martin's Style.—Martin usually adopted the form of a continuous monologue, blending argument, sometimes serious, sometimes burlesque, with ridicule and horse-play of an unrestrainedly personal kind. He was coarse and slashing, but not indecent like the hirelings employed by the other side. The following is a sample of his general style:

> To go forward, his Lordship of Winchester is a great Clarke, for he hath translated his Dictionarie, called Copers Dictionarie, verbatim out of Robert Stephanus his Thesaurus, and ilfauored so they say. But what do I speake of our bishop's learning, as long as bishop Ouerton, bishop Bickley, bishop Middleton, the Deane of Westminster, Doctor Cole, D. Bell, with many others, are liuing, I doubt me whether all the famous dunses be dead. And if you woulde haue me an ilsample of an excellent pulpit man in deede, go no further than the B. of Glocester now liuing.... And in him you shall finde a plaine instance of such a one as I meane. On a time he preaching at Worcester before he was B. vpon Sir Johns Day: as he trauersed his matter, and discoursed vpon many points, he came at the length vnto the very pithe of his whol sermon, contained in the distinction of the name of John, which he then shewing all his learning at once, full learnedly handled after this manner. John, John, the grace of God, the grace of God, the grace of God: gracious John, not graceless John, but gracious John. John, holy John, holy John, not John full of holes, but holy John. If he shewed not himselfe learned in this sermond, then hath he bene a duns all his life.—*The Epistle.*

The Other Pamphleteers.—Only a few of the numerous other combatants approached Martin in effectiveness, though we know little of certain plays in which he and his friends were burlesqued on the London stage. Penry's *Supplication to the Parliament* (1588) and *Th' Appelation of John Penri* (1589) were among the ablest; and another pamphlet, *M. Some laid open*, closely resembles Martin's in style, and is said to be the work of Throckmorton. The enemy began by gravely confuting even the humorous innuendoes of the Martinists. Then they tried answering them in their own vein, and employed Lyly, and perhaps Nash, in a campaign of violent abuse and not very effective fooling. *A Whip for an Ape* and *Mar-Martine* were

lampoons in verse. Lyly was probably the writer of *Pappe with a Hatchet*, which drew a reply from Gabriel Harvey, *Advertisement to Papp-Hatchet*. Gabriel's brother Richard wrote *A Theologicall Discourse of the Lamb of God and his Enemies*, and also perhaps *Plaine Percevall the Peace-maker of England*, a plea for common sense. *A Countercuffe given to Martin Junior*, *The Returne of Pasquill*, and *Pasquils Apologie* are from one pen, Pasquil being identified by some with Nash. But the most entertaining and original of the tracts on this side was *Martins Months Minde*, the attribution of which to Nash is almost certainly erroneous. The war came to an end with another tract in the *Papp-Hatchet* style, entitled *An Almond for a Parrat*, which makes some shrewd hits, but is too extravagant in its horse-play and ribaldry, and is very doubtfully ascribed to Lyly.

GREAT PROSE

RICHARD HOOKER (?1554–1600)

The name of Hooker, one of the saintly figures affectionately portrayed in Walton's *Lives*, stands for a very different phase in the controversy with the Puritans. He was a Devon man, who went to Oxford through the influence of Bishop Jewel, and became scholar, fellow, and lecturer at Corpus. From a living in Buckinghamshire he was promoted to the mastership of the Temple, which he held from 1585 to 1591, when he was made rector of Boscombe in Wilts, later removing to a living at Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury. At the Temple he distinguished himself in a famous controversy with the Presbyterian Walter Travers. But the bent of Hooker's mind was towards the retired life of the student and thinker, and he was happier as a country clergyman, in spite of being mated with an unsuitable wife, a cross which he bore with meekness and resignation.

"Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity."—A number of Hooker's sermons have been preserved, though he himself did not trouble to publish them. The great work of his life was the treatise on *Ecclesiastical Polity*, the first four books of which he wrote at Boscombe, and published in 1594. This is a methodical defence of the Church system established by the Elizabethan compromise against those who agitated for reform on Presbyterian lines. The school of Geneva maintained that the Presbyterian discipline was prescribed by Holy Writ. Hooker submitted that no particular form of ecclesiastical government was laid down by Scripture, which gave definite instruction on matters of faith and salvation, but allowed freedom to the Churches to select whatever form of polity was not inconsistent with religion. He pleaded that the orders consecrated by the Anglican settlement, together with the sacraments, rites, and ceremonies, were agreeable to reason and the law of God, and denied the Puritan imputation that the Church had corruptly preserved a mass of Romish practices and observances which had been banished from the reformed Churches.

Hooker's Views.—Since the close of the Marprelate controversy there had been a reaction, and public opinion was little in sympathy with Puritan dogmatism, inclining towards comprehensiveness and toleration. Even so, Hooker's moderation seemed a marvel to his contemporaries ; and, while it has made his work a sober and mature exposition of the Church of England system for later times, it dulled the edge of it as a weapon of controversy. Hooker generously refrained from utterly condemning the Calvinist discipline, acknowledging its many excellences, though he criticized the dogmatism with which it was held, its unscrupulous propaganda, the shallowness of the claim to infallibility, and the combination of demagogic revolt and intellectual arrogance that characterized its expounders.

Analysis of the "Ecclesiastical Polity."—The greatness of his book is due to his liberal comprehension of opposite points of view, and to the broad philosophic treatment of his theme, no less than to his admirable style. In the first book, "Concerning Laws and their several Kinds in General," he deals, philosophically and historically, with basic principles, and the lofty and persuasive attitude adopted here is maintained throughout. This and the fifth book, which is almost as long as the rest put together, are by far the most important. The latter sets forth in vast detail and with pious eloquence the whole system and doctrine of Anglican worship. It is a complete defence of the English Prayer Book, expounding the Scriptural warrant for the sacraments, rites, and ceremonies of the Church, and repudiating the charge that they retain any trace of popish superstition. Here Hooker appears at his greatest as a theologian and a master of dignified rhetoric.

His Style.—Hooker, more even than Bacon and Raleigh, was unaffected by the tendencies that were bringing the literary language closer to the raciness, terseness, and simplicity of the vernacular. The slashing style of the Marprelate tracts did not suit with his mode of controversy, always calm and dignified, studiously moderate in tone, aiming rather to persuade than to confute. His rhetoric was that of the university preacher, employing a learned vocabulary, and building a complex series of clauses into finely turned sentences, having the stately rhythm of Latin prose. His learning and imagination gave richness and sublimity to his eloquence, and the grave and solemn march of his argument changes to a soaring rhetoric without the least abruptness of transition, and hardly a break of cadence. Very different was this from the pretty tricks of the euphuists or the artificial prose-poetry of Sidney.

> The mind while we are in this present life, whether it contemplate, meditate, deliberate, or howsoever exercise itself, worketh nothing without continual recourse unto imagination, the only storehouse of wit and peculiar chair of memory. On this anvil it ceaseth not day and night to strike, by means whereof as the pulse declareth how the heart doth work, so the very thoughts and cogitations of man's mind be they good or bad do no where sooner bewray themselves, than through the crevices of that wall wherewith nature hath compassed the cells and closets of fancy. In the forehead nothing more plain to be seen than the fear of contumely and disgrace. For which cause the Scripture (as with great probability it may be thought) describeth them marked

of God in the forehead, whom his mercy hath undertaken to keep from final confusion and shame —Book V., lxv., 7.

In the matter of knowledge, there is between the angels of God and the children of men this difference: angels already have full and complete knowledge in the highest degree that can be imparted unto them; men, if we view them in their spring, are at the first without understanding or knowledge at all. Nevertheless from this utter vacuity they grow by degrees, till they come at length to be even as the angels themselves are. That which agreeth to the one now, the other shall attain unto in the end; they are not so far disjoined and severed, but that they come at length to meet. The soul of man being therefore at the first as a book, wherein nothing is and yet all things may be imprinted; we are to search by what steps and degrees it riseth unto perfection of knowledge.—Book I., vi., 1.

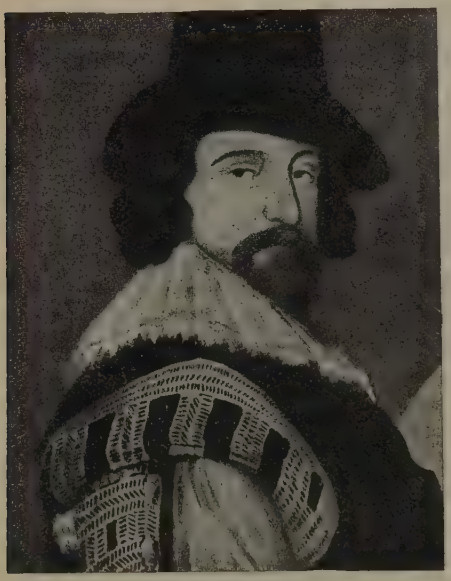
FRANCIS BACON (1561–1626)

Francis Bacon was the younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper to Elizabeth, and nephew to Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer. At the age of twelve he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. He was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1576, and was sent to Paris to complete his training in the suite of the ambassador, Sir Amyas Paulet. The death of his father in 1579 left him poorly provided for, and for a long while he had to depend for an income on work at the bar, and for advancement on the favour of his kinsmen the Cecils, who looked on him with a jealous and grudging eye. In spite of many not very dignified appeals to Burleigh and Salisbury, he was long in securing any lucrative appointment. He first entered Parliament in 1584. He became one of the queen's counsel about 1586, and in 1601 appeared for the crown in the trial of the Earl of Essex, who had previously treated him with extreme generosity. Bacon's conduct on this occasion can be justified as a matter of principle and professional obligation, but his zeal in the prosecution of his friend reflects little credit on his feelings.

Under James, Bacon was made Solicitor-General in 1607, and rapidly promoted to Attorney-General, Lord Keeper, and, in 1618, Lord Chancellor. He had been knighted in 1609, and was now created Baron Verulam, and, in 1621, Viscount St. Albans. The same year came his tragic fall. He was charged with receiving bribes; admitted his guilt in a letter to the Lords; was deprived of his offices, condemned to imprisonment and a fine of £40,000, which penalties were subsequently remitted; and retired to his paternal house at Gorhambury, to devote the remainder of his days to philosophy. He died in 1626 of a chill, contracted in trying the effect of cold in preserving a dead fowl. He was then at work on *Sylva Sylvarum*.

Bacon's Works.—His principal English works are the *Essays*, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), *The History of Henry VII.* (1622), *The New Atlantis* (written in 1614–18), and *Sylva Sylvarum*. He projected a great philosophical work to be written in Latin, of which he finished only portions. The first part of this *Instauratio Magna*, or Renewal of the Sciences, was his *De Augmentis*, mainly an amplification of *The Advancement of Learning*. The second, the *Novum Organum* (1620), is the most complete and important. Of the remaining portions he wrote only fragments.

His Character.—Bacon's character has been the subject of violent dispute. Macaulay depicted him as the supreme example of a shining intellect conjoined to a base and abject moral nature. His treatment of Essex showed the coldness of his affections. His servility to the dispensers of office in an age when advancement went by favour seems to us deplorable, but reveals, not so much the baser kind of self-seeking, as his ambition to be great in practical affairs as well as in the world of thought, and to use his genius for the common progress. As a judge, it has never been proved that he was influenced by bribes; though, from a laxity inconsistent with his advanced ideals, he fell in with the habit of accepting presents from suitors. His one pure ambition was the pursuit of knowledge. A commanding intellect and a rich imagination were qualified by a strange incapacity for emotion or moral earnestness, and have left these enigmas in the conduct of his life.



Francis Bacon.
(From the picture by Paul von Somer.)

The Baconian Philosophy.—With superb confidence Bacon declared, on the threshold of manhood, that he had taken all knowledge to be his province. The fundamental purpose of his philosophy was the extension and organization of human knowledge. With the ultimate grounds of knowledge or the problem of the nature of truth he did not concern himself. He aimed at a complete natural philosophy, a systematic inventory of nature based on observation and experiment. Thus he broke away from the speculative idealism of Plato and the neo-Platonists on the one hand, and on the other from the futile subtleties into which the Aristotelian philosophy had degenerated in the hands of the schoolmen. By basing knowledge on the investigation of phenomena, and establishing induction as the instrument of truth, Bacon laid the foundations of modern science. In his view science had a practical end. Ancient philosophers had taken knowledge itself as the supreme object. Bacon held that the end of science was the establishment of man's sovereignty over nature. "Two words," says Macaulay, "are the key of the Baconian doctrine—Utility and Progress."

The method he taught was the questioning of nature by means of induction, with which he would supersede the deductive method of the old philosophies. From the premises thus established as a basis, he would proceed to lower, middle, and higher axioms, the last being the most general and abstract, the middle axioms

those of most practical applicability. He unduly disparaged what he called the anticipation of nature, or the agency of the scientific imagination, in his insistence on the fundamental importance of interpreting nature by the accumulation of facts. He even thought that the quality of the investigating mind was of minor importance in comparison with the rightness of the method employed, and claimed that all wits and understandings were placed on a level by the possession of his instrument of discovery. Mind, to Bacon, was a mirror, passively reflecting the nature of things ; but as a mirror may be defective and uneven, and liable to distort the image of objects, so the mind is prone to certain errors. Here he develops his famous doctrine of idols (*eidola*)—idols of the tribe, the cave, the forum, and the theatre ; human error, error due to idiosyncrasy, errors of language, and errors of the philosophic schools.

Bacon's Statue in Gray's Inn.

The Essays.—Bacon had no more faith than the scholars of the previous century in the great destinies of the English language, and wished even the books that he wrote in his own noble English to be translated into Latin for permanence sake. His best-known English works are first the *Essays*, and then *The Advancement of Learning*. A Baconian essay is a thing apart. Entirely different from those of the discursive Montaigne, it consists of a string of aphorisms, gems of pregnant thought, sparkling with wit as well as profoundly luminous with wisdom. The transitions are abrupt, indicating that the thoughts were written down as they occurred, a circumstance explaining how the collection grew from ten in the first edition (1597) to fifty-eight in that of 1625. Here is a typical portion of a fairly short essay :

> We take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom. And certainly there is a great difference between a cunning man and a wise man, not only in point of honesty, but in point of ability. There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well ; so there are some that are good in canvasses or factions, that are otherwise weak men. Again, it is one thing to understand persons, and another thing to understand matters : for many are perfect in men's humours, that are not greatly capable of the real part of business : which is the constitution of one that hath studied men more than books. Such men are fitter for practice than for counsel ; and they are good but in their own alley : turn them to new men, and they have lost their aim ; so as the old rule, to know a fool from a wise man, *Mitte ambos nudos ad ignotos, et videbis*, doth scarce hold for them. And because these cunning men are like haberdashers of small wares, it is not amiss to set forth their shop.—XXII. *Of Cunning*.

"The Advancement of Learning" and other English Works.—*The Advancement of Learning* is a conspectus of the different departments of knowledge, "a small globe of the intellectual world," in which all is classified under the heads of human, natural, and divine, and again minutely subdivided, on a psychological plan. The contents are admirably ordered, and form the natural introduction to Bacon's greatest work, the *Novum Organum*, which sets forth his method of investigation, together with his doctrine of the mind as a mirror of the world, and of the fallacious tendencies described as the *Eidola*.

The History of Henry VII. is an interesting piece of thoughtful history, sagacious in portraiture, and in its analysis of motive revealing the statesmanlike student of affairs. In his fragmentary *The New Atlantis* Bacon began a romance depicting a race of men who had preserved a higher civilization from the mythical time of the lost Atlantis of Plato. It has a charm of its own, which does not, however, entitle it to rival More's *Utopia*.

Bacon's Style.—The *Essays* display Bacon's characteristic bent towards aphoristic exposition of thought, a tendency that in his other works is held in check by the procession of his great argument. The majestic flow of his style may be marked in the well-known passage defining his idea of poetry, which, with strange inadequacy, he calls "feigned history":

> Poesy is a part of learning in measure of words for the most part restrained, but in all other points extremely licensed, and doth truly refer to the imagination; which, not being tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature hath joined; and so make unlawful matches and divorces of things; *Pictoribus atque poetis*, etc. It is taken in two senses, in respect of words and matter. In the first sense it is but a character of style, and belongeth to arts of speech, and is not pertinent for the present. In the latter it is (as hath been said) one of the principal parts of learning, and is nothing else but feigned history, which may be styled as well in prose as in verse.
>
> The use of this feigned history hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is, agreeable to the spirit of man, a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety, than can be found in the nature of things. Therefore, because the acts or events of true history have not that magnitude which satisfieth the mind of man, poesy feigneth acts and events greater and more heroical. Because true history propoundeth the successes and issues of actions not so agreeable to the merits of virtue and vice, therefore poesy feigns them more just in retribution, and more according to revealed providence. Because true history representeth actions and events more ordinary and less interchanged, therefore poesy endureth them with more rareness, and more unexpected and alternative variations. So as it appeareth that poesy serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and to delectation. And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things. And we see that by these insinuations and congruities with man's nature and pleasure, joined also with the agreement and consort it hath with music, it hath had access and estimation in rude times and barbarous regions, where other learning stood excluded.—*Advancement of Learning*, Book II., III., 4, 1–2.

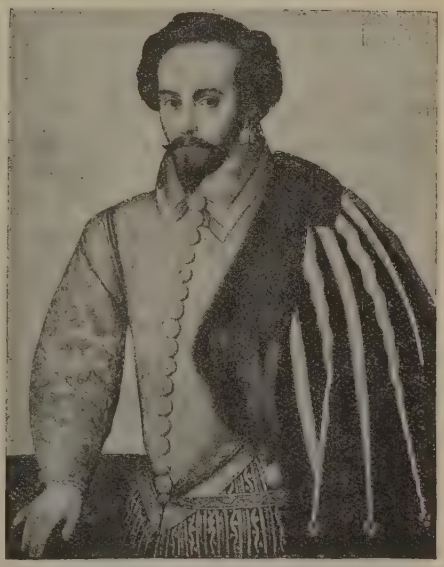
SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552–1618)

Raleigh, the courtier, soldier, and explorer, wrote several fine sonnets and other poems; various accounts of his travels and adventures, of which *The Discoverie of Guiana* shows his mastery of a clear, unassuming, and workmanlike prose; and the gigantic *History of the World* from the creation to 130 B.C., composed in the Tower, and originally planned for his young friend Prince Henry, son of James I. The preface, epilogue, and certain other parts of this contain some of the most eloquent and sonorous passages in English prose literature. The wonderful apostrophe to Death is familiar to every student:

> O eloquent, just and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambitions of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*—*History of the World*, Book V., VI.

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION (1611)

The final translation of the Bible issued under James is the greatest prose work of this, or indeed of any age, and the book that has had most influence on later writers of every school and type. It was the composite work of forty-six translators and revisers, among whom were Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, the original mover and president; Dr. John Spenser, the editor of Hooker; Dr. Miles Smith, Bishop of Gloucester, who wrote the Dedication and Preface; and other writers of great eminence. As we have already seen, they had invaluable material ready to hand in the successive versions put forth from Wyclif's time to Cranmer's, notably Tyndale's translation, which forms the main foundation of our English Bible. Not only so, but they were able to avail themselves of the many discussions that had taken place over the meaning of particular passages and particular words. Thus the new Bible was the outcome of a process of evolution, over which the finest intellects of the time had exercised a controlling influence. Various circumstances combined to perfect the result—the literary splendour of the original,



Sir Walter Raleigh.
(From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery.)

the beauty of the older versions in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and the actual state of the language. Prose was in transition from the stately but complicated and slow-moving Latinized diction to the nimbler and racier style of the novelists and pamphleteers. The ponderous and majestic qualities that befitted the dignity of sacred literature were saved from elaboration and excess by the need for strict fidelity to the original, and by the verse structure happily adopted; and, furthermore, the vernacular elements gave a concrete character and an inimitable vigour and sense of life. From the older versions, and especially from Wiclif's, came also the rich archaic flavour, and much of that verbal melody which is one of the most impressive attributes of the Authorized Version.

TRANSLATORS, HISTORIANS, TRAVELLERS, ETC.

Translators.—The chief translations of novels and tales under Elizabeth have been enumerated earlier in this chapter. This was the golden age of translation into English. Rich booty awaited every adventurer, and no pedantic tradition hampered the free expression of what each interpreter, himself a man of letters in the great age of letters, conceived to be the spirit of his original. Caxton had made the Englishing of foreign classics an industry. It was now not only a flourishing craft, and the chosen occupation of writers not endowed with original genius, but a cherished hobby for men of leisure, scholars, and statesmen, as it has often been since. A vast number of works from the French, Italian, or Spanish were registered at Stationers' Hall; and Homer, Xenophon, Ovid, Livy, Tacitus, Sallust, Cæsar, Pliny, part of Virgil, the chief works of the Silver Age, and in fact most of the classics, except Plato and the greater dramatists, were now made available for the English reader.

Continental Works.—Reference has been made to North's popular rendering of Guevara's *Diall of Princes*, and to the host of translations from Spanish. Another translation on which the interpreter has lavished almost as much of himself and his own idiosyncrasy as of his author is Florio's exuberant rendering of Montaigne. Machiavelli's *Prince* seems not to have been Englished till 1640, and the *Decameron* did not appear as a whole until 1620. But the lesser works of both Machiavelli and Boccaccio had already been given to the English world, and had made their influence deeply felt on action and thought. Sir Thomas Hoby had achieved a skilful translation of the *Cortegiano* of Castiglione (1561). Thomas Danett had done parts of Guicciardini into English in 1593, and translated De Commines in 1601. Other famous versions of the moderns were Sylvester's Du Bartas, which exercised an almost inexplicable fascination on English writers, two renderings of Tasso by Edward Fairfax and Richard Carew, and Sir John Harington's Ariosto.

Classical Works.—Among translations from the classics North's Plutarch, and those of Philemon Holland from Pliny and Suetonius stand with the highest. North

made his version from the French of Amyot, who himself had added charm to Plutarch's pedestrian style. The *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* in North's vivid and dramatic prose is a masterpiece beyond either Amyot or Plutarch. Philemon Holland was the most enthusiastic and industrious of all these translators. He was a Latin and Greek scholar himself, and made his renderings directly from Livy, Pliny, Suetonius, or Plutarch. The Suetonius and the Pliny give us the best of his rich and harmonious prose. Underdowne's *Æthiopian Historie* and Adlington's *Golden Ass* are derived from Heliodorus and Apuleius through foreign translations, but remain in many respects the choicest literary renderings we possess of these writers.

Travellers.—An era of exploration and adventure naturally begat an immense literature of travel. The bulk of it is found in two vast collections made by Richard Hakluyt (? 1552–1616) and his successor Samuel Purchas. But before Hakluyt the work of collecting or translating records of discovery had been commenced by Richard Eden, translator of Münster's *Universal Cosmography* (1553) and Peter Martyr's *Decades of the Newe Worlde, conteyning the Navigations and Conquestes of the Spaniards* (1555). Hakluyt's life's work began in 1582 with his *Divers Voyages touching the Discoverie of America.* The collection of material for his greater enterprise took many years. The first edition of *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* appeared in 1589, but his edition of 1598–1600, in three folio volumes, was greatly enlarged. It contained the narratives of Davy, Willoughby, Sir John and Sir Richard Hawkins, Drake, Best's account of Frobisher, and a vast amount of both contemporary and older record, for Hakluyt took " these 1500 yeares " as his limits. Purchas, who began as his collaborator, continued the task in *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (1625) and two succeeding works. Besides these huge storehouses, there were many individual works having literary as well as historical value, notably that curious production of an eccentric scholar, Coryat's *Crudities* (1611), and Captain John Smith's *General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1626).

Historians.—History at this time was less a literary affair than it had sometimes been previously ; it was also quite as far from being modern and scientific. Hall and Holinshed drew as indiscriminatingly from their predecessors, even Geoffrey of Monmouth, as those worthies had drawn from theirs ; and except for their own period, where they were not free from bias, they have left little of value except good stories and antiquarian information. This is eminently the case with Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1578), the most famous of them all. Bacon's *Henry VII.* stands alone as history of a higher order. Hall's *Chronicle* (1542), however, changes to something better when he comes to Henry VIII., of whose reign he gives a patriotic eulogy. On the other hand, John Stow ranks as a topographer rather than an historian ; and Leland, author of the *Itinerary*, as a still more homely and unliterary labourer in the same field. Harrison's *Description of England* gives

SCOTIA
ANGLIA
He shewed his word vnto Iacob, and he hath not dealt so with any nation. Psal. 147
HAKLVYTVS
POSTHUMIUS
OR
PURCHAS HIS PILGRIMES
Containing a History of the World in Sea voyages & lande Trauells by Englishmen & others.
Wherein
Gods Wonders in Nature & Prouidence, The Actes, Arts, Varieties, & Vanities of Men, & a world of the Worlds Rarities, are by a world of Eyewitnesse Authors, Related to the World
Sepulchred in print by M. Hakluyt at his death. Now since aided, His also perused & perfected. All examined, digested, Illustrated with Notes, Enlarged with Cuts. Adorned with Pictures, and Expressed in Mappes. In foure Parts. Each containing five Bookes.
By SAMVEL PVRCHAS B.D
Aetat 48.
PARS SVA CPLVM
Imprinted at London for Henrie Fetherstone at the signe of the rose in Paules Church-yard 1625.

Title-page of Purchas's "Pilgrimes," 1625.

a picturesque account of life in Shakespeare's day. William Camden wrote annals of England and Ireland in Elizabeth's reign, in Latin ; but his great work was his *Britannia*, a comprehensive survey of his native country which is still valued as an authority. Foxe's *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Times* (1563), commonly known as *The Book of Martyrs*, " the longest pamphlet ever composed by the hand of man," belongs more to religious controversy and sectarian propaganda than to literature or history.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

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Studies and Criticisms.—JORDAN, J. C. : *Robert Greene* (Columbia Press, 1915).—BONNARD, G. : *La Controverse de Martin Marprelate* (Genève, Jullien, 1916).—See also under Chapter 3.

Chapter 7. LATER DRAMA

Beaumont and Fletcher—Middleton, Webster, Heywood, Tourneur, Day, Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Minor Dramatists

FRANCIS BEAUMONT (1586–1616) and JOHN FLETCHER (1579–1625)

Francis Beaumont was born at Grace-Dieu, in Leicestershire, probably in 1586. His father, Sir Francis Beaumont, a justice of the Common Pleas, came of a good old county stock. The poet was admitted a gentleman commoner at Broadgates Hall (Pembroke College), Oxford (1596), whence he came early to London and entered the Inner Temple. He produced his *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, performed at Court on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth and the Count Palatine, in 1613. Beaumont died in London, March 9, 1616, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

John Fletcher, son of Richard Fletcher, Dean of Peterborough, and eventually Bishop of London, was born at Rye in Sussex (December 1579). He was educated at Benet College, Cambridge, and would seem to have come to London a little earlier than Beaumont. He had certainly begun his literary career by 1607, and Thorndike puts *The Woman's Prize* as early as 1604. John Fletcher wrote incessantly for the stage until his death of the plague (August 1625). He is buried in St. Mary Overy's (St. Saviour's), Southwark. Modern criticism has done much to modify the old traditions respecting Beaumont and Fletcher, and has swept away many an anecdote of their Pythian friendship. Fletcher survived Beaumont nearly ten years, and during that decade his pen was never idle.

Works.—Beaumont's fame rests mainly upon five plays: *Philaster* (1609), *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610), *A King and No King* (1611), *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (published 1613), and *The Scornful Lady* (p. 1616). These are indisputably the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. Mr. Macaulay indeed gives *Philaster* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* wholly to Beaumont, and most authorities allow that in these five Beaumont's work predominates. To Fletcher alone are generally given: *The Faithful Shepherdess* (*c.* 1609–10), *Monsieur Thomas* (p. 1639), *The Chances* (folio 1647), *The Humorous Lieutenant* (p. 1640), *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* (p. 1640), *The Wild Goose Chase* (p. 1652), *The Mad Lover* (folio 1647), *The Loyal Subject* (folio 1647), *The Pilgrim* (folio 1647), *Bonduca* (folio 1647), *Valentinian* (folio 1647), and a few less popular dramas. Massinger collaborated with Fletcher in *Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* (acted 1619, p: 1884), *Thierry and Theodoret* (p. 1621), *The Prophetess* (folio 1647), *The Custom of the Country* (folio 1647), *The Elder Brother* (p. 1637), *The Spanish Curate* (folio 1647), and *The Little French Lawyer* (folio 1647). *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (printed in 1634 as by Fletcher and

Shakespeare) probably contains genuine work by Shakespeare. There are other plays in which Fletcher had no small share—*e.g. Beggar's Bush* (folio 1647), *The Lover's Progress* (folio 1647), *The Coxcomb* (folio 1647), *The Knight of Malta* (folio 1647). *The Bloody Brother* (p. 1639) is attributed to Ben Jonson and Fletcher. Fletcher also collaborated with Rowley and Middleton.

Characteristics.—Although much has been written of "the mysterious double personality" of Beaumont and Fletcher, yet there may be discerned in their separate work traits which will aid us to individualize the two poets. Judging Fletcher by his undisputed output, we see a witty, brilliant, keen observer of life, which he drew with facile pen. His plays abound in *joie de vivre.* He had a keen sense, if not of humour, at any rate of fun and merriment. Francis Beaumont we must consider as the graver of the two; his genius had a weight and majesty his comrade could not reach. He displays in his work a moral seriousness which, when mingled with the delicate fancy of his comrade, produces results of great beauty and power. His characterization, however, is as a whole too romantic for the individuals to stand forth clean and clear. He shows also some confusion of motives: and in order to end a play often demands a sudden change of will and inclination or some unexpected and startling event, as in that fine drama *A King and No King.* This, however, is not so marked in him as in Fletcher, who in later days wrenched character again and again, and strained probability to the utmost. Beaumont had the higher comic powers, amply evidenced by the first two acts of *The Scornful Lady* (critics assign the last three acts mainly to Fletcher) and that fresh and happy burlesque *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.* His sense of dramatic interest, his technique and manipulation of events, have scarcely been surpassed among the romantic poets.

"The whole range of our dramatic literature outside Shakespeare can show no such plays as *The Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster.*" This statement can be accepted with one qualification: we must understand "no such plays of their kind." *The Maid's Tragedy* contains scenes of almost unendurable horror, such as the night in the bridal chamber when Evadne reveals her hideous secret to her husband; it contains scenes of an infinite pathos as we see the "lost Aspatia" drooping and fading like a flower thrown in the dust. *Philaster,* again, with its character of Euphrasia (Bellario) is rich in beauties of style and thought. *The Scornful Lady* long kept the stage, as also did *A King and No King. The Knight of the Burning Pestle* ranks high amongst our burlesques, and has the hall-mark of genius. *The Woman Hater* has been thought to be perhaps all Beaumont's. It has some excellent characterization and a deep fund of humour. *The Captain,* mainly Fletcher's, is a good comedy, and *Cupid's Revenge,* which has found scant favour with some critics, is a tragedy of great power and interest. Beaumont no doubt had a share in *Thierry and Theodoret,* a tragedy whose plot is derived from the French chronicles. Of the plays held to be by Fletcher alone we have the

two tragedies, *Valentinian* and *Bonduca*, the former dealing with Valentinian III., Emperor of the West, the latter with a Roman invasion of Britain. *The Faithful Shepherdess*, a pastoral play of much charm and melody, stands by itself. *Monsieur Thomas* and *Wit without Money* are fine comedies. *The Chances* and *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* remain two of Fletcher's masterpieces. As romantic comedies *The Humorous Lieutenant*, *The Loyal Subject*, *The Mad Lover*, *The Pilgrim*, claim a high place, whilst *The Wild Goose Chase* has a wit and verve that anticipates the brilliant repartee of half a century later. There are some romantic plays, such as *The Sea Voyage*, reminiscent of *The Tempest*, assigned to these two poets, and four comedies—*The Custom of the Country*, *The Elder Brother*, *The Spanish Curate*, *The Little French Lawyer*. Of these four the first, although it has some licentious scenes, is the best; the last is perhaps the funniest. *The Maid in the Mill* and *The Fair Maid of the Inn* may have something of Rowley in them. *The Night Walker* was acted in 1634 as a work by Fletcher, revised by Shirley.

Style.—Fletcher was a rapid and even careless writer, and we are often confronted with the most extreme looseness of metre. His line sometimes extends to twelve, thirteen, and even fourteen syllables; but eleven is his favourite number, which makes his blank verse almost pure hendecasyllabics. He, however, could write good blank verse without monotony or extravagance. Rhyme he rarely uses; prose is rarer yet. In spite of his laxities there is something very musical and sweet in the cadences of Fletcher. His lyrics have a charm all their own. Beaumont's verse is clearer and more tightly knit. It is remarkably free from any pronounced mannerisms. It has indeed been compared in type to the verse of Shakespeare's middle period, and there is a certain richness of rhythm which well adapts it to rhetorical and poetic narrative. Rhyme occasionally rounds off a speech, and there is a tendency to balance clauses and parentheses which we never meet with in Fletcher's laxer style. Dryden in *An Essay of Dramatick Poesy* declared that in Beaumont and Fletcher's plays the English language perhaps arrived at its greatest perfection, and there can be no doubt that they have had more influence on the English tongue than is usually allowed. In so large an output of work it is remarkable how little there is which can be termed mediocre.

THOMAS MIDDLETON (*c.* 1570–1627)

Life.—Thomas Middleton was born in London about 1570. He received a good education, for his works contain obvious marks of classical scholarship and breeding. As a young man he entered Gray's Inn, and his first known connection with the stage is in 1599, when he collaborated with W. Rowley in *The Old Law*. In 1601–2 he was writing regularly for the theatre. In succeeding years he wrote pamphlets, composed speeches and pageants for civic ceremonials (1613),

and worked hard at masques, a lucrative business. He was appointed city chronologer in 1620. In his extraordinary topical drama *A Game at Chess* (1624) the leading politicians of England and Spain appear under the names and guises of chequers. The play won a triumph, and the Spanish ambassador complained to the king. Middleton died (Midsummer 1627) in his house at Newington Butts.

Works.—Of Middleton's twenty plays the following are the chief: *Michaelmas Term* (1607); *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608); *A Mad World, my Masters* (1608); *No Wit, No Help, like a Woman's* (1657); *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1630); *The Witch* (1778); *Women beware Women* (1657); *More Dissemblers besides Women* (1657); and in collaboration: (with Dekker) *The Roaring Girl* (1611); (with Rowley) *A Fair Quarrel;* (with Jonson and Fletcher?) *The Widow* (1652); (with Rowley) *The Changeling* (1653); (with Rowley) *The Spanish Gipsy* (1653). The above order is approximately that of composition; the dates are of publication.

Character and Views.—Middleton was a man of wide observation, gifted with a keen sense of humour. "Facetious Middleton" he is called in some contemporary verses. He had what we may term popular sympathies, and it is obvious that he had mixed with all grades of society and knew the darkest corners of Elizabethan London. His two pamphlets, *Father Hubbard's Tale* and *The Black Book*, give proof of no slight acquaintance with the haunts and ways of those bullies, thieves, cyprians, and extravagants who lived so merrily and so sordidly under the rule of the first James and his successor. It is obvious from his plays that Middleton was a man who would be wholly disinclined to favour any extreme sect or party. That he had no love for the Puritans is amply testified. In *The Family of Love*, a crude production, he scarifies another Amsterdam sect. In his Aristophanic *A Game at Chess*, "our famous play of Gondomar," he attacks the supposed Spanish and Catholic intrigues. Middleton, in fact, in matters political and religious, expressed the thought and feelings of the ordinary Englishman.

Works Classified.—"The plays of Middleton," writes Swinburne, "are not so properly divisible into tragic and comic as into realistic and romantic—into plays of which the mainspring is essentially prosaic or photographic, and plays of which the mainspring is principally fanciful or poetical." *Michaelmas Term* has been well described as "an excellent Hogarthian comedy." Its successor, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, takes a high place in the theatre of Middleton. True, we have no new individualization; the types—miserly old men, reckless spendthrifts, courtesans—are almost Plautine; but with the old stock the poet has worked wonders. It is the vigour, the life, the wit infused into each character and scene that makes the whole so real and animated. *The Family of Love* is somewhat dull; *A Mad World, my Masters*, is an excellent comedy; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* is one of the most audacious comedies that ever startled Puritanism. *A Fair Quarrel* rises to greater heights than the realistic plays and won the enthusiastic praise of Lamb. *The*

Spanish Gipsy opens with a situation of extraordinary interest; *More Dissemblers besides Women* and *The Widow* are both happy; *The Witch* derives most of its interest and reputation from its association with *Macbeth*; Charles Lamb has finely differentiated the hags of Middleton from the Weird Sisters. *Women beware Women* is unfortunately spoiled by defects in character and construction. *The Changeling*, many scenes of which are, in Scott's just phrase, "horribly striking," is a masterpiece. Swinburne praised "the perfect and living figure of De Flores." Beatrice is scarcely less well drawn; and the scene where she suddenly realizes what reward De Flores is asking for the crimes she has urged and commanded, and later her cry of despair and utter desolation "I must trust somebody!" put this tragedy very little below the masterpiece of Webster himself. It is unhappily weighed down by an underplot, the composition of William Rowley.

Characteristics.—In comedy the most prominent characteristics of Middleton are his keen observation and the vigour with which he treats his themes. London lives in his scenes. In depicting the life of the people with its commonplace incidents and accidents he had as great a power as Dickens in a later day, although he had not the same power of creating individuals. In tragedy he has scenes of the highest emotional tension. Swinburne says that a critic who "denies Middleton a high place amongst the poets of England must be not merely ignorant of the qualities which involve a right or confer a claim to this position, but incapable of curing his ignorance by any process of study."

JOHN WEBSTER (*c.* 1570–80–1625)

Life.—John Webster, who is conjectured to have been born in the decade 1570–80, was, it is stated, the son of a tailor. During 1602–7 he was collaborating with Middleton, Heywood, Chettle, and Dekker. In 1612 was printed *The White Devil*; it could not have been written before 1610. *The Duchess of Malfi*, although not printed until 1623, must have been written and produced 1612–14. *Appius and Virginia* (1654) stands apart from the other plays and cannot be dated. *Monuments of Honour*, a mayoral pageant from Webster's pen, was exhibited in 1624. The poet seems to have died in the following year, and is generally identified with John Webster "cloth-worker," who made his will August 5, 1625. Gildon states that Webster was clerk of the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn, and the tradition long survived; there is, however, no such parochial record.

Character and Views.—"We rise from the perusal of his [Webster's] Italian tragedies with a deep sense of the poet's power and personality." That personality was sinister and sombre; Webster's philosophy of the scheme of things deals with a world of sorrow at which he gazes through an imagination clouded with gloom. Yet he never shrinks or falters from agonies that are beyond human

endurance. "There is no poet morally nobler than Webster." There is in him a sense of the onward, irresistible march of events, of the retribution that surely follows crime, of the remorseless, almost mechanical trend of destiny that the great Greek poets often suggest. His metaphors are of coffins, death, fevers, the lazar-house, the grave.

Works.—The additions made by Webster to that sardonic drama *The Malcontent* (1604) are negligible. *The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyat* (1607) has come to us but as a fragmentary chronicle. Of the three comedies, *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho* (1607) were written in conjunction with Dekker, *A Cure for a Cuckold* (printed 1660) with Rowley. Both *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho* depict the same light-hearted, adventurous, amorous gallants, the same well-to-do jealous cits, the same coarse-grained, robust, honest citizens' wives. In *A Cure for a Cuckold* Webster had a larger hand. It is a dramatic piece, but unhappily probability falls to the ground. *The Devil's Law Case* (1623) has magnificent passages, but the blemishes are so glaring as almost to counterpoise its beauties. *Appius and Virginia* (printed 1654) is too simple a plot for Webster. Its classical limitations did not suit the poet's tenebrous genius. In his two great Italian tragedies, however, Webster's power found full scope. Both plays are heavy with doom, madness, lawless intrigue, the anguish and sufferings of the innocent, the seeming triumph of the guilty. Of the two *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623) is the greater. There are few things more terrible in literature than the picture of the Duchess cloistered a prisoner in her own palace, whilst at midnight the mad folk from the common hospital are howling outside the door. Unfortunately the cruelty and terror have no adequate motive to make them credible; and the last scenes prove still more clearly Webster's "lack of dramatic tact." Yet it would be an overstatement to represent Webster as merely revelling in the ghastly. In *The White Devil* he endues the death of Vittoria with far less physical horror, and therefore renders it more impressive than it appears in the chronicle. The figure of the Duchess of Malfi herself is ineffably beautiful, gentle, and sweet in the midst of nightmares and shambles.

Style.—Charles Lamb has drawn attention to the extraordinary power, the "earthy" nature of Webster's lyricism. He instances Cornelia's dirge in *The White Devil*. The "dismal preparation," the bellman's heavy rhymes in *The Duchess of Malfi*, seem to be, if possible, earthier yet. But this is not the whole account of the matter. Webster had two purely poetical qualities which atoned for his dramatic defects: "a great though confused imagination, and a wonderful power of phrase" (Saintsbury). That he was able to make the matter he chose terrible and hideous, painful and sad, without being entirely revolting, is due to his power of lighting the gloom by sudden flashes of insight, shining in lines of simple speech.

> My soul, like to a ship in a dark storm,
> Is driven I know not whither,

cries Vittoria when she is struck down and dying. And the Duchess of Malfi still lives in the words:

> O that it were possible we might
> But hold some two days' conference with the dead!
> From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure
> I never shall know here.

Even her inhuman brother and murderer is given the immortal line:

> Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

It is passages such as these, unsurpassed in our literature, and not his forced humour, his concocted horrors and mechanical villainies, which give Webster his place among the great.

THOMAS HEYWOOD (*c.* 1572–*c.* 1650)

Life.—Thomas Heywood was born about 1572, of a good Lincolnshire family. He was a resident member of Cambridge University, but the traditional statement that he held a fellowship at Peterhouse is almost certainly incorrect. Henslowe's diary (October 14, 1596) mentions Heywood as writing or having just completed a play, and he soon added the profession of actor to that of dramatist. His oft-quoted statement that he had "either an entire hand or at the least a main finger" in 220 plays, is not incredible when we consider the length of time he was connected with the stage. Besides his plays he produced a number of other works both in verse and prose, the most important being *An Apology for Actors* (1612). He was producing pageants as late as 1639. He appears from contemporary evidence to have been alive in 1648.

Character and Views.—That Heywood was a sound scholar is evident from his works. There runs all through his plays the evidence of a genial, sunny nature, and he was obviously the most zealous of patriotic Englishmen. More, he was a Londoner of Londoners, and is never happier than when celebrating the honour of stately merchants, the humours of the citizen, the roguery and jollity of prentices, though he seems to have had scant love for courts. The satiric vein, so prominent in many of his fellows, is notably lacking in his work. His plays were written with such speed and, once they had been brought on the stage, he was so entirely careless of their destiny, that it is evident he regarded them as of no great literary importance—less so, indeed, than those pageants and masques, the folio chronicles and histories, all of which, as Swinburne says, we would gladly exchange for but one of those 200 plays now lost. His loyalty to English tradition shines in such a drama as *The Fair Maid of the West*, or again in *A Challenge for Beauty*, where the two heroes, Montferrers and Manhurst, Englishmen both, stand out in contrast with Valladaura and the chivalry of Spain.

Works.—The two chronicle plays, each having two parts, *King Edward the Fourth*

(1600) and *If You Know Not Me, You Know No Bodie: or, The Troubles of Queene Elizabeth* (1605–6)—Part I. of which is jumbled and fragmentary, having been printed from a stenographic copy—consist of a number of plots, incidents, and scenes put together without technique, and in the second play lamely jolted along with dumb-shows of the crudest kind. Yet there are here and there flashes of poetry and pathos. *The Four Ages* (*Golden, Silver, Brazen, Iron*) are full of miscellaneous adventure, action, and hustle, and no inconsiderable amount of poetry, which serve to carry through a dangerous experiment. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607) is Heywood's masterpiece. *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608) has powerful scenes, intermingled with ungainly farce and a number of ballads most inappropriately introduced. The romantic plays *The Fair Maid of the West* (1631), *A Maidenhead Well Lost, A Challenge for Beauty, The Captives,* possess in parts a striking beauty. *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* has a sentiment which is not sufficiently simple. *The Trial of Chivalry* and *The Royal King and the Loyal Subject* are inferior. *The English Traveller* (1633) is a gallant drama, with its picture of splendid youth. *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (1638, with Brome) is remarkable for its technique. *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634) once at least strikes a deep and terrible note, in the guilty Mrs. Generous whom her husband seeks to redeem from her sorceries.

There are few scenes of intenser pathos in our drama than the climax of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, when the husband, whose worst suspicions have been aroused, returns at midnight to his wife's chamber to find her in her lover's arms:

> Oh God! Oh God! That it were possible
> To undo things done; to call back yesterday!

The picture of the penitent whose heart is broken with kindness is drawn with a compassion simple but most touching and true. Heywood was fond of drawing frail women, who fall and then are devoured with remorse and shame. It has been said by a great critic that Heywood's "men are all gentlemen," and the dramatist is certainly almost unsurpassed in his understanding of adventurous, clean, high-spirited youth. "A prose Shakespeare" is Lamb's enthusiastic verdict on Heywood. He is a writer who wins the heart, and he has a certain dignity and pathos which distinguish him from dramatists who in poetry and profundity of thought surpass him.

CYRIL TOURNEUR (*c.* 1575–1626)

Life.—Cyril Tourneur was born about 1575. He began his literary career in 1600 by a satire called *Transformed Metamorphosis*, in which forced conceit, allegory, and obscure verbiage are pushed to an extreme. In 1609 he published a funeral poem on the death of Sir Francis Vere, and four years later a similar elegy on Prince Henry. About this date he was engaged in writing a play for Henslowe, but in the winter of 1613 he went to Brussels in the king's service. He seems to have spent

many years in Flanders. In 1625 he went with the empty expedition to Cadiz as "secretary to the lord marshall," and on his return died in Ireland (February 1626).

Works.—*The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611); *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607). *The Nobleman* is not extant, the manuscript having been destroyed by a servant. The poems, embodying many of the worst affectations and ugly preciosities of his time, are negligible.

Characteristics.—The muse of Tourneur was crooked and sinister, and he often blundered into extravagance and unreality. His genius, though powerful, was morbid and saturnine, and not without cynicism. There runs through his work a curious sense of fatality that pursues lust and crime to their appointed end. His fame rests on his two tragedies, indeed almost wholly upon *The Revenger's Tragedy*. His first drama, which although printed last is undoubtedly an earlier production, *The Atheist's Tragedy*, exhibits a wild and romantic story—a charnel-house at midnight, murders, funeral pomps, ghosts, a fatal duel in a brothel, a scaffold on the stage, and a most notable villain. The workmanship is often rough and uncertain. *The Revenger's Tragedy* stands on a higher plane. Unity is given to it by the protagonist, the fateful figure of Vendice towering above the princelings of that petty Italian state. One of Tourneur's greatest critics notes the "painful moral flaw which makes his occasional good work like that of a remorseful and regretful fallen angel."

JOHN DAY (*d.* 1640)

Life.—There are few allusions to Day among his contemporaries, and what we know of him is chiefly due to Henslowe, for whom he wrote assiduously. As there are continual records in the *Diary* of small sums lent to the poet, he would seem to have been in constant financial difficulties. Henslowe was no easy taskmaster to his journeymen, and the list, no doubt a very incomplete record, of plays which Day composed alone or in collaboration is sufficiently lengthy. Most have perished, and we need hardly regret Day's hack work. He is described as "sometime student of Gunvill and Caius Colledge in Cambridge." When he began to write for the stage is not definitely known. He seems to have died in the autumn of 1640.

Works.—*The Isle of Gulls* (1606); *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (with Rowley and Wilkins (?), 1607); *Humour out of Breath* (1608); *Law-Tricks* (1608); *The Parliament of Bees* (1641); *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green* (1659).

Characteristics.—A "base fellow" and "a rogue" Ben Jonson, in a moment of spleen, dubbed him, but we may be sure he was neither. A lyric poet rather than a dramatist, his genius proved quite unable to find scope in the conditions under which he was obliged to work. Little wonder that in his earlier productions there is

occasionally a bitter note, a sarcasm over-tart. Fleay believed that in his later years the old playwright contemplated taking holy orders. The plot of *The Isle of Gulls* is from Sidney's *Arcadia*. Cleverly constructed, it lacks interest, and the characters are not sufficiently individualized to arouse any sustained attention. The tennis scene, however, is famous for its badinage and repartee. *Humour out of Breath* is a delightful imbroglio of jest and adventure, hurrying along with grace and nimbleness. *Law-Tricks* is a lively, entertaining comedy. *The Parliament of Bees* is really not a play at all, but an exquisite fantasy full of delicate music. There is no attempt at a plot; it can hardly even be termed a masque. *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* and *The Blind Beggar*, irregular and hasty pieces, are of little account. The chief characteristic of Day, beside his lyrical genius, is a swift wit and play of fancy which has been declared to be "a sort of foretaste of the comedies of Congreve." It is by *The Parliament of Bees* that Day's name will live, and in that aerial commonwealth his genius finds fullest expression. "Golden murmurs from a golden hive" have come down to us through the centuries.

PHILIP MASSINGER (1583–1640)

Life.—Philip Massinger, in some way connected with the "noble family of the Herberts," was born at Salisbury in 1583. He entered at St. Alban Hall, Oxford (1602), but instead of following the academical course—logic, philosophy, and the like—he read nothing but poetry and romances, with the result that he left without a degree (1606). From Oxford he came to London, and little is known of his career save that he was in constant difficulties, and in 1613–14 immersed in such debt that he appealed to Henslowe for relief. Massinger no doubt began his career with collaboration and adaptation, and it has been assumed that he did not appear as an independent author much before 1620. He speaks of his "trod-down poverty," and his life seems to have been one ceaseless struggle. It is stated that upon his death the fourth Earl of Pembroke granted his widow the reversion of an annuity, some £30 or £40, which had been bestowed on the poet. The last of Massinger's many plays appeared only six weeks before he died. On March 18, 1640, there was buried in the churchyard of St. Saviour's, Southwark, Philip Massinger, "a stranger."

Works.—Before 1623: *The Duke of Milan; The Unnatural Combat. The Bondman* (1623); *The Renegado* (1624); *The Parliament of Love* (1624). Before 1626: *A New Way to Pay Old Debts; The Roman Actor. The Maid of Honour* (1626); *The Great Duke of Florence* (1627); *The Picture* (1629); *The Emperor of the East* (1631); *Believe as You List* (1631); *The City Madam* (1632); *The Guardian* (1633); *A Very Woman* (1634); *The Bashful Lover*, with Dekker (1636). The above dates are all of first performance. *The Virgin Martyr* (licensed 1620). With Nathaniel Field Massinger wrote *The Fatal Dowry* (1632); with Middleton and

W. Rowley *The Old Law* (1656). He also collaborated with Fletcher. Many of Massinger's plays were destroyed in manuscript by Warburton's cook.

Characteristics.—"Grave and great-hearted Massinger" Swinburne called the poet, and the epithets are felicitous. The dedications to his dramas show a sensible, modest, and prudent spirit. He seems to have been of an amiable and courteous disposition, which won the affection of his fellows. He was deeply religious, as is evident from the tenor of his plays, in which he treats sacred things with uniform respect. It is conjectured by Gifford, and the conjecture is almost a certainty, that Massinger "during his residence at the university had exchanged the religion of his father for one at that time the object of terror, persecution, and hatred." Scenes from *The Virgin Martyr* might without incongruity grace a miracle play, and the author's belief in the efficacy of sacraments is very noticeable. *The Renegado* gives us a priest and a Jesuit, Father Francisco, who with a noble sympathy directs, consoles, guards all the best characters in this fine tragi-comedy. One of Massinger's most attractive women, Camiola, the heroine of *The Maid of Honour*, discovering the faithlessness of her lover Bertoldo, takes the veil from the hands of her confessor, Father Paulo. *The Bondman* has been held to convey severe reflections on the all-powerful Duke of Buckingham. We know that Queen Henrietta Maria markedly patronized Massinger. His religion would afford an additional reason for her favour.

Of Massinger's five extant tragedies, *The Duke of Milan*, the motive of which has a superficial resemblance to that of *Othello*, is a fine and striking play. In *The Unnatural Combat* the satanic Malefort predominates, whose hideous career and baleful passions light scene after scene with a lurid horror. *The Fatal Dowry* is considered Massinger's best tragedy. The opening is managed with great skill, and our sympathies are at once engaged on behalf of Charolois, who is finely contrasted with his companion, Romont. The vanities and coxcombry of Novall junior remind us not a little of the immortal Lord Foppington. *The Roman Actor*, which the poet ever held to be "the most perfect birth of his Minerva," in spite of many fine qualities is not entirely successful. In *The Virgin Martyr* we have one of the best of Massinger's plays, with its exquisite figure of St. Dorothy. At the head of his comedies stands by common consent *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and the character of Sir Giles Overreach has become a commonplace in literature. Of *The City Madam* Gifford remarks, "It is not easy to speak in appropriate terms of praise." As a picture of life and manners it anticipates the Restoration theatre, and every incident, however varied, is knit into unity by the predominant figure of Luke *The Old Law* is an amusing piece, and *The Guardian* contains one excellent character, Durazzo, who has more than once been copied by succeeding writers. Massinger's tragi-comedies or romantic plays are pleasing. For dignity and sublimity of phrase *The Renegado* disputes the first place with *The Maid of Honour*. *The Bondman* derives its plot from Plutarch's story of Timoleon the Corinthian, and from

Justin. *The Emperor of the East* is taken from the history of Theodosius the younger, and has some powerful scenes. *The Great Duke of Florence* is notable for its fluent verse. *The Picture*, "a true Hungarian history," must also be assigned a high place amongst Massinger's work.

Style.—Massinger preserves an equality, an elegance of diction, and a balance of judgment, which, although it may not reach the sublimest heights, never falls into the gulfs of bathos and tedium. All critics unite in praising the purity and simplicity of his language. His technical skill in the management and conduct of his plots is remarkable, and amidst a throng of copious incidents he rarely violates probability. He had some classic learning, and a notable intimacy with ecclesiastical history and tradition, and with the practice, use, and symbolism of Catholic ceremony. Although not infrequently coarse in expression, his morality is above reproach. His forte was romantic comedy, which needs poetry, pathos, and natural passion. In pure comedy he had not enough wit to sustain the dialogue on which the quality of such scenes depends. His eloquence is vigorous, pointed, and powerful, but his tragedy is grave and solemn rather than awful and sublime.

JOHN FORD (1586–*c.* 1640)

Life.—John Ford was a native of Ilsington in Devonshire. His mother was a sister of Lord Chief-Justice Popham. He is almost certainly the John Ford, "Devon, gen. of.," who matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford (March 26, 1601). On November 16, 1602, he was admitted a member of the Middle Temple. In 1606 he published *Fame's Memorial*, an elegy on the death of the Earl of Devonshire. In this poem he makes reference to a lady, "bright Lycia, the cruel, the cruel-subtle," who had apparently scorned him. *Honour Triumphant* (1606) is a prose pamphlet. In 1621 we find him collaborating with Dekker and Rowley in *The Witch of Edmonton;* and *The Sun's Darling, a Moral Masque*, is believed to be Dekker's original revised by Ford. Gifford notes a faint tradition that Ford, being possessed of ample means, retired to his native place, and ended his days in complete retirement.

Characteristics.—A contemporary distich pictures Ford:

> Deep in a dump John Forde was alone got,
> With folded arms and melancholy hat.

Ford is the most modern of the Elizabethans. He studied the springs of action, and as the exponent of the naked human soul is akin in his subtle analysis to Stendhal, Flaubert, and the Goncourts. He seeks to

> Sigh out a lamentable tale of things
> Done long ago, and ill done; and when sighs
> Are wearied, piece up what remains behind
> With weeping eyes, and hearts that bleed to death.

It is noticeable how in *The Lover's Melancholy* Ford was indebted for the suggestion of several passages to Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a book congenial to his sad, analytical genius. Ford's insight is indeed mainly psychological. His characters are interesting not because of what they do, but because of what they are.

Works.—Passing over *The Lady's Trial* (1639), a drama that in spite of felicities of style is in no way representative, *The Fancies Chaste and Noble*, marred by its absurd story, *The Sun's Darling*, a moral masque written in conjunction with Dekker, we find Ford's genius best exhibited in five plays: *The Witch of Edmonton* (1658), *Love's Sacrifice* (1633), *Perkin Warbeck* (1634), *The Broken Heart* (1633), and his masterpiece, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633). *The Witch of Edmonton* (published in 1658, probably acted in 1622) is ascribed to Dekker, Ford, and Rowley. Ford's share was undoubtedly the episodes of Sir Arthur Clarington, Winnifred and young Thorney. The chronicle history of *Perkin Warbeck* ranks high amongst our best historical dramas. Yet save for the subtly analytical problem of Warbeck's psychology, it has few of the qualities marking Ford's most characteristic work. *The Broken Heart*, "a monument of sorrows," "a row of heart-broken figures with little movement and no definite plot or story," roused the enthusiasm of Lamb. The figure of Bianca in *Love's Sacrifice* remains one of the best drawn of all Ford's characters. There can be no doubt that in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* Ford reached his highest point. There are few things of its kind more complete, more beautiful, more entirely human and pathetic.

Style.—The music and sweetness of lyric poetry are so infused into the verse of Ford, that sometimes his numbers seem to melt away in pure melody. It has been held that this very melody is so subtle and mellifluous that it is hardly adequate to the strength of those headlong passions wherewith he deals. But his blank verse is not more musical than Beaumont and Fletcher's, and it is used for less natural purposes—to make acceptable situations which are not natural at all. "Ford cannot do with nature: he must go against or beyond her to fetch effects of tragedy, and in doing this he stands condemned and excluded from the first order of poets of his own time, or indeed of any" (Saintsbury).

JAMES SHIRLEY (1596–1666)

Life.—James Shirley was born in London (September 18, 1596), and admitted into Merchant Taylors' School (1608). There he proved an apt scholar, and passed to St. John's College, Oxford (1612). Tradition says that he was hindered by Laud, who liked and appreciated him, from taking holy orders, owing to the fact that one cheek was disfigured by a large mole. Whilst yet an undergraduate Shirley migrated to Catherine Hall, Cambridge, whence he graduated B.A. in or before 1618. A year or two later he took orders, and obtained a living near St. Albans, Herts.

In 1623 he became a master in the grammar school of this town. This change was owing to his having become a Roman Catholic, and his writings certainly suggest fervent and conscientious conviction. His first play was licensed in February 1625, and in this year he moved to London, taking up his residence in Gray's Inn, and setting up "for a play-maker." A rapid succession of well-received plays assured him in his vocation, and he speedily won the patronage of Queen Henrietta Maria. In 1635–6 he crossed to Dublin; he seems to have returned to England for a brief visit in 1637, but not permanently to have taken up his residence in London again till 1640. On the outbreak of civil war (1642) Shirley followed his patron the Duke of Newcastle to the field. Upon the collapse of the royal cause he withdrew to London, and spent his days in teaching, as well as publishing his own plays and issuing other works from the press. At the Restoration several of his dramas were revived with applause. Having been driven with his (second) wife Frances from his house near Fleet Street owing to the Great Fire, he died of shock and exposure a few weeks after. His wife expired the same day, and both were buried in St. Giles's Churchyard (October 29, 1666).

Works.—Shirley has left thirty-three dramas, four masques, two poems, and three grammatical treatises. Of his plays the best known are: *The Changes* (1632), *The Witty Fair One* (1633), *The Traitor* (1635), *Hyde Park* (1637), *The Gamester* (1637), *The Lady of Pleasure* (1637), *The Maid's Revenge* (1639), *Love's Cruelty* (1640), *The Cardinal* (1652). The dates are those of publication.

Characteristics.—Shirley's gentleness and amiability of character won him the regard of his fellow-poets. He was an accomplished scholar, and his moral standard as displayed in his theatre is far higher than that of the bulk of the Caroline drama. Like all those who were connected with the stage, he was a loyalist to the core. In the dedication to *A Bird in a Cage* he smartly reproves Prynne, then awaiting his sentence for his libel *Histriomastix*.

Shirley's tragedies, though few, contain his best dramatic work. The comedies fall into two groups—romantic and realistic plays. *The Maid's Revenge* (licensed February 9, 1626) is founded upon a story in Reynolds's *God's Revenge against Murder*. The character of the quack Sharkino is admirable. *Love's Cruelty* is impressive and intense, and was revived with great success at the Restoration. *The Duke's Mistress* is more of a tragi-comedy than tragedy proper, since only the two villains, Valerio and Leontio, die. *The Cardinal* has been ranked high amongst English tragedies. *The Traitor*, based on a Florentine story, cannot be adjudged a lesser work. Shirley's realistic plays are a vivid picture of life in the reign of Charles I. *The Wedding* and *The Witty Fair One* are both excellent specimens of their kind. *Hyde Park* is a lively and entertaining piece, and the same epithets may be used of *The Ball*, in which Chapman's alleged collaboration must be slight, or perhaps nil. *The Lady of Pleasure* is a comedy

of intrigue, which furnished hints for dramatists to come. *The Gamester*, however, is recognized as his best piece of realistic comedy. In romantic comedy Shirley has left us no less than fourteen dramas. *The Young Admiral*, *The Opportunity*, *The Gentleman of Venice*, *The Humorous Courtier*, *The Imposture*, *The Royal Master*, are all plays of merit.

Style.—Shirley's versification is singularly elegant, smooth, and correct, without being insipid or monotonous. His skill in the construction and conduct of his plots should be noted, also the effective manner in which he portrays by minute touches the changes of mood and emotion.

Dryden in *MacFlecknoe* speaks of Shirley with contempt as mere lumber, and Oldham writes in the same strain; but Phillips in his *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675) holds the poet "little inferior to Fletcher himself." Certainly his plays formed a happy hunting-ground for many a man of little note, who mangled the dramatist and forbore to own whence he took his spoils. Lamb terms him "the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language and had a set of moral feelings and actions in common."

He was in fact the last poet who was an Elizabethan born, and in one great lyric, published in his volume of 1646, he showed his quality better than in any of his plays.

The glories of our blood and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things:
There is no armour against Fate;
  Death lays his icy hands on kings:
    Sceptre and Crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade.

THE MINOR ELIZABETHAN DRAMATISTS

RICHARD BROME, who seems to have been rather a secretary than a servant to Ben Jonson, is first heard of as an author in 1623. Fifteen of his plays have come down to us, and many of these possess comic qualities which are insufficiently recognized. He is, as might be expected, at times somewhat imitative of Jonson. *The Antipodes*, *The Sparagus Garden*, *The City Wit*, *The Mad Couple well Matched*, are happy efforts. As illustrations of old London life these plays are valuable; nor are his more romantic dramas without merit, such as *A Jovial Crew*, which is a picture of the joys and liberties of vagrancy. Brome died in 1652, when the land had fallen on evil days.

WILLIAM ROWLEY (? 1585–? 1642) has, through his collaboration with greater dramatists, attracted more attention than he perhaps deserves. His verse has the faults of harshness, stiffness, and extravagance. He has considerable power, but sadly lacks restraint and refinement. "Rowley," says Mr. Bullen, "roared

like a bull of Bashan when he ought to have been dignified. But he had a genuine gift of humour." His best comedy is *A New Wonder, a Woman never Vexed*. *All's Lost by Lust* is a robustious but not ineffective tragedy founded on a Spanish legend. *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* has little value. The amusing *A Match at Midnight* contains little if any of Rowley's work.

OTHER DRAMATISTS.—Nathaniel Field (1587–1633), who was originally one of the Children of the Chapel Royal, has left two agreeable comedies, *A Woman is a Weathercock* and *Amends for Ladies*. Their construction is good, their humour merry, and their wit pointed. Robert Davenport, three of whose plays survive, and Thomas May, whose comedies *The Heir* and *The Old Couple* are both meritorious, deserve mention. Davenport's *The City Night-Cap* is a good specimen of romantic drama. Henry Glapthorne as a dramatist is remembered by two comedies, *The Hollander* (1640) and *Wit in a Constable* (1640), neither of which, however, rises above mediocrity. William Cartwright's *The Ordinary* copies Jonson, not without some humour. His tragi-comedies are extravagantly romantic. Jasper Mayne's *The City Match* has plenty of bustle and life.

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Chapter 8. LATER POETRY

Giles Fletcher the Younger—Phineas Fletcher—Drummond of Hawthornden—Browne of Tavistock: *Britannia's Pastorals*—Sir John Davies—George Wither, etc.

GILES FLETCHER THE YOUNGER (*c.* 1585–1623)

Life and Works.—The two sons of Giles Fletcher, author of *Licia*, were the chief inheritors of the Spenserian tradition under the Stuarts. The younger brother, who was his father's namesake, was born in London about 1585, and was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge. He graduated in 1606, and later held the offices of a minor fellow and of reader in Greek grammar and language. It was while he was in residence at Cambridge that he wrote his poetry. Soon after his matriculation he had contributed *A Canto on the Death of Eliza* to an academic miscellany, *Sorrow's Joy* (1603), lamenting Elizabeth and welcoming James. In 1612 he wrote elegies in English and Latin for *Epicedium Cantabrigiense*, a similar collection mourning the untimely fate of Henry, Prince of Wales. Two years previously he had published his chief work, *Christ's Victory and Triumph*. Some time after 1618 he retired to a college living, which he exchanged for the rectory of Alderton in Suffolk, where he died in 1623. In the same year was published his prose religious treatise, *The Reward of the Faithful*.

Giles Fletcher and Spenser.—*The Canto on the Death of Eliza* is chiefly notable for its versification. In it Giles Fletcher, in his freshman's year, already used the modified form of the Spenserian stanza which he was to employ later in *Christ's Victory*. In *Christ's Victory* this measure proves its fitness to "sing divine and heroical matters." It has been seen that the chief characteristic of the elder Giles Fletcher in his sonnets was his treatment with Anacreontic grace of episodes of which Cupid is the central figure. In somewhat similar style the younger Giles handles the episodes of the Nativity, the Temptation in the Desert, the Crucifixion, and the Ascension into Heaven.

Upon a grassy hillock he was laid,
With woody primroses befreckeled;
Over his head the wanton shadows played
Of a wild olive, that her boughs so spread
As with her leaves she seem'd to crown his head.
. . . . . .
His cheeks as snowy apples, sop't in wine,
Had their red roses quencht with lilies white,
And like to garden strawberries did shine
Wash't in a bowl of milk, or rose-buds bright
Unbosoming their breasts against the light.

This would seem to be the picture of some youthful pagan god in the garden of Adonis; it is Fletcher's conception of Christ in the Wilderness. The details of the Temptation are worked out on Spenserian lines. The Devil is a second Archimago, an aged sire arrayed as a hermit. He leads the Saviour to the "baleful bower" of Despair, to the pavilion of Presumption, and to the garden and court of Vainglory, on which is lavished a warmth of colouring that recalls Acrasia's bower in Book II. of *The Faerie Queene*. Again in the Spenserian manner he compares the Virgin's tears after the Crucifixion and burial of her Son to those of Philomel singing her sad tale on an aspen sprig.

Fletcher's Idealism.—But other poets could reproduce something of Spenser's imagery and pictorial art. Fletcher, in higher measure than any of his school, can blend, like his master, Platonic idealism and Christian mysticism. In "the prologue in heaven," as the first canto might be called, after Justice, "a virgin of austere regard," has called for punishment on sinful man, Mercy pleads his cause. She is the "self-idea of all joys to come," the essential perfection of which earthly things are all frail shadows:

> If any ask why roses please the sight,
> Because their leaves upon thy cheeks do bower;
> If any ask why lilies are so white,
> Because their blossoms in thy hand do flower.

The same conception of all the beauties of nature having their source in the divine Archetype inspires the triumphal hymn at the beginning of the fourth canto, where Earth arrays herself in her most radiant vesture to greet the day of the Resurrection. And when the Saviour has ascended into heaven, Fletcher with soaring vision seeks to portray the Holy City and the Idea Beatifical which lightens in its midst:

> End and beginning of each thing that grows,
> Whose self no end, nor yet beginning knows,
> That hath no eyes to see, nor ears to hear,
> Yet sees and hears, and is all-eye, all-ear,
> That no where is contain'd, and yet is everywhere.

In the splendid paradoxes of this and the following stanzas Fletcher lifts us into a supersensual sphere into which Spenser himself does not venture. Here he is a kinsman of the "metaphysical" poets; while in his treatment, both deeply religious and passionately imaginative, of Gospel episodes he is a forerunner of the Milton of *The Nativity Hymn* and of *Paradise Regained*.

In his *Elegy on Henry, Prince of Wales*, we find that he has gone back to the time-honoured rhyme-royal stanza; but even in this there are lines that have a new and tender cadence:

> Sleep softly, royal ghost, in that cold bed;
> Let death's pale chambers give thee easy rest,
> Where all the princely bones lie buried
> With gilded crowns and long white sceptres drest.

PHINEAS FLETCHER (1582–1650)

Life and Works.—Phineas Fletcher was born at Cranbrook in Kent in 1582, and was thus about three years senior to his brother. He was educated at Eton and at King's College, Cambridge, where he was elected a scholar in 1600. After graduating he continued in residence, and became a fellow of King's in 1611. Upon leaving Cambridge, about 1616, he appears to have become chaplain to Henry Willoughby, who in 1621 presented him to the rectory of Hilgay in Norfolk. Here he seems to have remained till the Civil War. He died in 1650, having survived his brother for twenty-seven years.

Except for his contributions to *Sorrow's Joy* and another Cambridge miscellany, no poem by him was published till 1627, when his Latin epic *Locustæ*, and the English version of it, *The Apollyonists*, were issued together. In 1628 came *Britain's Ida*, attributed by the publisher to Spenser, but without doubt by Phineas Fletcher.[1] In 1631 the "piscatory" play *Sicelides* was printed, and it was followed in 1633 by the volume containing *The Purple Island or The Isle of Man*, *Piscatory Eclogues*, and *Poetical Miscellanies*. In the same year appeared *Sylva Poetica*, a collection of Latin occasional pieces and pastorals. In 1670, twenty years after Fletcher's death, a publisher printed his prose tractate *A Father's Testament*, which included eleven devotional poems and nine versions of *Metra* in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*.

A Fisher-play and Eclogues.—Except *A Father's Testament*, probably all Phineas Fletcher's writings named above date from his Cambridge days. Thus we know that *Sicelides* was acted at King's College on March 13, 161$\frac{4}{5}$, though it was not printed till sixteen years later. It is interesting as one of the few examples of the fisher-play in English. The plot is involved, but in the dialogue and choruses there are pleasing passages, and in two foolish fishers, Cancrone and Scrocca, we have clowns with a note of originality. There is a close relation between *Sicelides* and *The Piscatory Eclogues*. Fletcher has a curious habit of plagiarizing from himself, and a number of lines are common, with some variations, to the play and the poem. The piscatory eclogue, though popularized by Sannazaro in Italy, never had a vogue in England. By his choice of it Phineas was able to give something of a novel setting to his theme, and to bring in local allusions to Cambridge and its river. Otherwise his seven eclogues are in the tradition of *The Shepheardes Calender*, though the influence of *The Faerie Queene* is also seen in the versification, as the stanzas of varying length end, with one exception, in an alexandrine. Under such names as Thirsil, Thelgon, Thomalin, and Myrtilus the poet disguises himself, his father, and his friends, and bewails personal and family wrongs. Other eclogues take the time-honoured form of the love-complaint or the singing-match. Another, wherein the fishers of

[1] See Preface to *Poetical Works of Giles and Phineas Fletcher*, by F. S. Boas, Vol. II., pp. xiii–xxi.

Jordan and Tyber, and the Prince of fishers himself, are mentioned, turns the piscatorial imagery to religious purposes in approved humanist fashion.

The Purple Island.—In the introduction (as it may be called) to *The Purple Island* Fletcher again appears as Thirsil singing on the banks of the Cam, though now called a shepherd instead of a fisher. He asks indulgence for his "infantine beginnings," and in the dedication of the volume to Edward Benlowes he similarly speaks of "these raw essays of my very unripe years." The phrases must not be pressed, for the poem, whenever begun, cannot have been completed till after Fletcher's ordination (Canto I., 6–7). The island of which he sings is one that is strangely overlooked by those

> who plough the seas
> With dangerous pains another earth to find.

It is the purple-veined Isle of Man, "near as ourselves, yet farthest from our care.' Fletcher proceeds to repair this neglect by describing man's bodily, psychical, and moral qualities in an allegorical poem of twelve cantos. The work has had to suffer from misplaced ridicule by many who have not understood Fletcher's aim nor viewed *The Purple Island* as a whole. The underlying conception is a noble one; it looks upon nothing in man as common or unclean, and regards him as a being whose humblest bodily parts and highest spiritual faculties have alike been embraced in the scheme of redemption. But Phineas was weak in the sense of humour and of proportion. Hence in Cantos II.–V. his meticulous elaboration of the corporeal allegory, elucidated by physiological side-notes, has often a grotesque effect. Yet even here there are occasional higher flights, and from Canto VI. onwards, where the poem deals with mind and soul, the interest is sustained throughout, in spite of diffuseness and a lack of the higher imagination.

"The Apollyonists."—It was in a vision of hell, not of heaven, that Phineas was to show his most original powers. As early as 1611 (as we know from a still existing manuscript) he had completed the first draft of the Latin poem *Locustæ*, which, after various revisions, was published in 1627. With it there appeared the English paraphrase *The Apollyonists*, in five cantos, in a variation of the nine-lined Spenserian stanza. Lucifer and the other fallen angels are seen in conclave in the bottom of hell's palace. The infernal leader is unrepentant, undismayed:

> But me, oh never let me, Spirits, forget
> That glorious day, when I your standard bore;
> And scorning in the second place to sit,
> With you assaulted heaven, his yoke forswore.
> . . . . . .
> Where are those spirits, where that haughty rage,
> That durst with me invade eternal light?

He now summons them to wage war not against heaven but earth, and asks "the

states of hell" to give their counsel. He is followed by Equivocus (known as Apollyon in hell), who assures Lucifer that they are no changelings, but ready again for the fray, with the aid of "those new stamp't friars," the crafty, wrangling Jesuits.

From this point the poem sinks to a lower level, recounting in strident tones Jesuit misdeeds and intrigues, culminating in the Gunpowder Plot. But this descent into contemporary polemics cannot blind us to the significance of the first two cantos. Fletcher's pictures of the fallen but defiant Archangel and of the infernal council must have been fresh in Milton's memory when he wrote the opening books of his great epic. In other Jacobean poets we hear echoes of *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene*. It is the peculiar glory of Giles and Phineas Fletcher that in their verse these echoes mingle with deeper notes that foretell the sublime music of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

Drummond of Hawthornden.
(*From an engraving of* 1711.)

WILLIAM DRUMMOND (1585–1649)

Life.—William Drummond, eldest son of John Drummond, gentleman usher to King James, was educated at Edinburgh University, where he took his degree in 1605. In the next year he visited London, whither his father had followed the court, and in 1607 travelled to Paris, where he stayed for nearly two years. In 1610 his father died, and Drummond, resisting the temptation of the court career which he might have had, settled down as laird of Hawthornden. His *Tears on the Death of Mœliades* (Prince Henry) was published in 1613, his *Sonnets, Songs, and Madrigals* (including *Urania*) in 1616, and in the next year his *Forth Feasting*, a paneygric of King James. During this period he made the acquaintance of Sir William Alexander, a Scottish poet of reputation, of Michael Drayton, and of Ben Jonson, who visited him in 1619, and whose conversation he records. In 1623 he published his religious verse *Flowers of Sion*. From 1632 till his death he wrote little but pamphlets in support of King Charles, and having acquired the reputation of a malignant "he was extremely harassed by the prevailing party." The king's execution hastened his end.

Poetry.—Born and brought up in what was, in many respects, a backward country,

Drummond had been preserved from the familiarity with Italianate culture which in England had already bred contempt. By 1606, when he visited London, the smart English youth had learned to "curse Petrarch," to laugh at Shakespeare, to parody Lyly, and to affect a weariness even of Spenser.[1] But to the unspoiled Scottish student, dazzled by the splendour of English life, the "revellings and comedies," masques and tournaments, these authors seemed to express the spirit of the age. He bought them all (as his manuscript lists show) and read them. He was happily unconscious that the soul of chivalry was dead with Sir Philip Sidney, and that the jousts held in honour of King Christian were, like Arthur's Last Tournament, the empty husk. He took them for what they seemed, and carried back to his quiet library a dream of "the good and fair." He believed in chivalry, not as a mere code of manners, but as an inspiration, a philosophy, and a private discipline. From Plato and his Italian commentators he learned to enlarge his conception of love, and to realize in himself at least the theoretic side of Castiglione's *Courtier*. From Petrarch, Tasso, Sannazaro, and above all Marino, he drew a stately diction suitable to the character. In the process he ceased to be a Scot and became an Elizabethan Englishman born too late. He rediscovered the sonnet at the moment when it had fallen into disfavour, and took pride in having Englished the madrigal. His dislike of Ben Jonson was probably due not only to temperamental antipathy, but to the fact that the Englishman trampled on his literary idols. "He cursed Petrarch for redacting verses into sonnets"! and advised Drummond (painfully conscious of his own) to study Quintilian, "who, he said, would tell me the faults of my own verses as if he lived with me."[2] Drummond must have been bewildered by the discovery that in the eyes of Ben Jonson he was an anachronism. His poems have the faults typical of Elizabethan poetry: preciosity of language and inflation of style. But these are easily overbalanced by merits as typically Elizabethan. More theoretic and more melancholy than Sidney's, his verse has, nevertheless, the same magical resonance—an echo, as he would say, from the world of Ideal Beauty in which he so passionately believed, and its purest manifestation.[3] He is most inspired when he is most philosophical, though the difficulty of dealing with abstract speculations in verse sometimes defeats his inspiration.[4] He cannot fly at a low pitch. To succeed with such a trivial theme as that of *Phyllis, on the Death of her Sparrow*, requires something more than the dour humour which he displays in the *Epigrams*. It requires archness, which Drummond was too good a Scot to possess. His trivial verses nearly always show great technical skill, but they show little else. When his poetry is not sublime it is uninteresting.

[1] See *Pilgrimage to Parnassus; Henry IV.;* Sir John Roe's *Epistle to Sir Nicholas Smith*, printed among Donne's satires; and Sir John Davies's *Gulling Sonnets*.

[2] Drummond's *Conversations*.

[3] See *Poems: The Second Part*, Song II.

[4] See *An Hymn of the Fairest Fair*.

WILLIAM BROWNE (?1591–?1645)

Life.—Browne was born at Tavistock and went up to Exeter College, Oxford, about 1604. Leaving the university without a degree, he entered Clifford's Inn, whence he migrated to the Inner Temple in 1611. In 1624 he returned to Oxford, took his M.A., and became a tutor at his old college. Four years later he married again (his first wife died in 1614), and "having purchased an estate," retired to the neighbourhood of Dorking, where he died.

Poetry.—Poetry was Browne's favourite pursuit,[1] but he had a very modest opinion of his own powers,[2] and was content to follow the great masters, Spenser, Sidney, and Drayton.[3] From them he drew his morality and patriotism; from them he learned a style copious, leisurely, and ornate. Although in his *Epistle to Fidelia* he denies that he is one of the "Parrots who speak the tongue of Arcadie," he continually borrows from Sidney. Even the shepherd boy, "piping as though he should never be old," reappears in *Britannia's Pastorals:*

> Here from the rest a lovely shepherd boy
> Sits piping on a hill, as if his joy
> Would still endure, or else that age's frost
> Should never make him think what he had lost.

But, in spite of his borrowings, Browne has originality. He was too fond and proud of his native Devonshire[4] to turn courtier entirely, even in verse. In the most florid pastoral description, when the unreal brooks and impossible birds are in most unearthly conspiracy of sound, his mind suddenly flits to some lonely bay, where a real "herdess" paddles at sunset among the wheeling gulls, or he hears the merry shouts of schoolboys chasing a squirrel up some wooded cleeve.[5] These wonderful flashes of natural description occur for the most part in the epic similes with which *Britannia's Pastorals* is infested, and they constitute the chief merit of the poem. They atone for its intolerable diffuseness, and mitigate the tedium of its drowsy allegories.[6] If only he had made the material of his comparisons the material of his main theme, he would have written a much more charming poem. As a whole it is irremediably tedious because its subject is slight and its construction flimsy. It is more discursive than Thomson's *Seasons*, with less excuse. In his eclogues, *The Shepherd's Pipe* (1614), he follows Spenser at some distance, and by his praise of Chaucer and his inclusion of a tale by Hoccleve shows that he shared Spenser's literary enthusiasms. These poems are neither better nor worse than most English

[1] *Britannia's Pastorals*, ii., 4. 175.
[2] *Eclogues*, v., 77.
[3] *Britannia's Pastorals*, i., 3., 177; i., 5., 897; ii., 1., 1000; ii., 2., 247; etc.
[4] *Britannia's Pastorals*, ii., 3., 600.
[5] *Britannia's Pastorals*, ii., 3., 139, and i., 5., 697.
[6] See especially *Britannia's Pastorals*, i., 5., 620–720.

eclogues, and possess some biographical or topical interest. His minor poems, though some of them are deplorably fantastic (e.g., *On an Infant Unborn*), are never contemptible. The sonnets which he wrote to his second wife have a note of sincerity rare in sonnets, and his paraphrases of Horace were obviously a congenial task. The songs scattered throughout his works are slight and over pretty, but they are never what his decasyllabic verse is apt to be, clumsy and obscure ; and three of them, at least, are immortal.[1] His style is on the whole " Arcadian," but in the grotesque homeliness of his comparisons, the laborious ingenuity of his conceits, and his frequent use of compound epithets like " many-kernel-bearing " or " self-pleasing-since-new-gotten " (a trick which he probably learned from Sylvester), we detect that straining after effective expression which resulted in the " metaphysical " style.

SIR JOHN DAVIES (1569–1626)

Life.—Davies was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, whence he proceeded to the Middle Temple. Called to the bar in 1595, he was disbarred two years later for assaulting Richard Martin, to whom he had dedicated *Orchestra* (1596), in Middle Temple Hall ; and, retiring to Oxford, employed himself in writing *Nosce Teipsum* (1599). He was subsequently recalled, became solicitor-general for Ireland in 1603, attorney-general in 1606, and was Lord Chief Justice designate in 1626, when he died of an apoplectic stroke.

Poems.—Men of wit, says Davies in *Nosce Teipsum*, " like angels do contemplate still," for

> Wit is the mind's chief judge which doth control
> Of fancy's court the judgments false and vain.

With this definition in his mind he was saved from the worst extravagances that passed for wit among the Elizabethans, and was able to write verse that appealed to the 18th century. *Orchestra* is, perhaps, the most courtly poem in English. Superficially it is a whimsical debate on the subject of dancing between an indolent queen and an eloquent courtier ; but really it is an ecstatic contemplation of the divine order and design in the universe, of which dancing is taken as the type. It is something between a fanciful conceit, like Fletcher's *Purple Island*, and a surmise in natural philosophy, like Browne's *Garden of Cyrus*. The movements of nature, the laws of science, the rules of art, and the stories of classical mythology are cleverly interpreted in terms of " traverses " and " keys " to mark the fact that they are all evidence of a Creative Intelligence.

> Who sees a clock moving in every part,
> A sailing pinnace, or a wheeling cart,
> But thinks that Reason, ere it came to pass,
> The first impulsive cause and mover was ?

1 " For her gait if she be walking ; " *A Round ; Lydford Journey.*

The skill with which Davies veils his real enthusiasm of a philosopher under a certain shade of unconcern suitable to a courtier is admirable. Pope himself had not a better manner.

In *Nosce Teipsum* Davies drops sophistry for dialectic, and instead of silencing argument by a flood of enthusiastic eloquence, tries to approach his conclusion in an orderly manner by stating and answering objections. This method is inimical to poetry, for objections which are voiced only to be demolished inevitably lack the sincere emotion without which good poetry cannot exist. Hence, while the introductory meditation, "Of Human Knowledge," is a noble piece of rhetoric, his demonstration of the "Immortality of the Soul," which follows, is a prosaic performance, only redeemed by felicity of language. Its sonorous commonplaces were echoed by Young in his *Night Thoughts*, and its metre was adopted by Davenant for his *Gondibert* and by Gray for his *Elegy*.

Other poems by Sir John Davies are *Epigrams*, published with Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*; *Astræa*, a series of acrostic verses in honour of the queen; and *Twelve Wonders of the World*, published in the second edition of Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*. The *Gulling Sonnets*, attributed to him by Grosart, are excellent parodies and afford interesting evidence of the change in literary fashions. The seventh, which seems to have an autobiographical reference, deserves to be quoted:

Into the Middle Temple of my heart
The Wanton Cupid did himself admit,
And gave for pledge your eagle-sighted Wit
That he would play no rude uncivil part.
Long time he cloak'd his nature with his art,
And sad and grave and sober he did sit;
But at the last he 'gan to revel it,
To break good rules and order to pervert.

Then Love and his young pledge were both convented
Before sad Reason, that old Bencher grave,
Who this sad sentence unto him presented
By Diligence, that sly and secret knave,
That Love and Wit for ever should depart
Out of the Middle Temple of my heart.

GEORGE WITHER (1588–1667)

Life.—The life and character of George Wither are more interesting than his poetry. The son of a well-to-do Hampshire squire, he went up to Magdalen College, Oxford, in his fifteenth year. He left without a degree, and after some time spent behind his father's plough, was "sent to one of the Inns of Chancery" in 1606. About this time he wrote *Fidelia* and *The Fair Virtue*, but his first publication was *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, of which the earliest copy extant is dated 1613. For the satirical attack upon the Lord Chancellor which it contained Wither was imprisoned, and employed his leisure writing *The Shepherd's Hunting* (1614). *Fidelia* was

privately printed in 1615, after his liberation. *Wither's Motto* (1621) was the cause of his second imprisonment, though it is difficult to discover why. With the publication of *Fair Virtue* in 1622, Wither's career as a poet virtually ends. His religious verse, *Hymns and Songs of the Church* (1623), *Britain's Remembrancer* (1628), *A Collection of Emblems* (1635), and *Hallelujah, or Britain's Second Remembrancer* (1641), often show zeal triumphant over inspiration. At the outbreak of the war Wither found himself on the side of the Parliament, which, as he tries to explain in *Campomusæ* (1643), was the side of the king "against his Ill-Advisers." He raised and captained a troop in Surrey, where he was put in command of Farnham Castle, near his own home. Later when, at some date unknown, Wither was captured by the Royalists, Sir John Denham, with whom he had had a quarrel, "desired his Majesty not to hang him, for that whilest G. W. lived, he (Denham) should not be the worst poet in England." [1] The charge was not unjust. Wither the poet had given place to Wither the fanatic, and in the long stream of pleas, denunciations, prophecies, and platitudes which came from his pen after 1642 it is difficult to find an imaginative line. Like so many "Enthusiasts" of his time he had come to believe that his utterances were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and were therefore exempt from criticism. Poverty and advancing years made him more tactless, self-confident, and garrulous. He lost a post that Cromwell gave him about 1655 through "declaring unto him those truths which he was not willing to hear of." In 1661 he was imprisoned once more, for a poem inoffensive in itself but suspicious for the truculent meekness with which it was penned; and once more he was able to appear in what had become his favourite rôle of the just man suffering for the people.

Works.—The qualities of Wither's poetry, as of Wordsworth's, are determined by his moral preoccupation. He obviously distrusted poetry, not because he thought it wicked, but because he felt that its conventions stood between him and reality. He never achieves a beautiful passage without breaking off to tell his reader that it really means something,[2] and he makes all his poems too long from an uneasy feeling that he has failed to express the true inwardness of his theme. But if his moral preoccupation accounts for his weaknesses, it is also the secret of his strength. It was because he distrusted the paraphernalia of poesy that he was sometimes able to write verse as forcible and free from poetic diction as Wordsworth's *Michael*. *Fidelia* and the verses *To his Loving Friend, upon his Departure* are both, perhaps, too long. But "homely," the adjective so often applied to Wither's muse, is surely too feeble a word to describe the noble sincerity, the moral exaltation, and the passionate reserve of these two poems. In language as simple as Wordsworth's, and in couplets as fluid as Chaucer's, Wither gains an effect which the Elizabethan dramatists, with all their resources of eloquence and metrical skill, often missed.

His religious verse, of which *Hallelujah* provides the best examples, is inferior

[1] Aubrey.

[2] See *Fair Virtue*, line 1,876.

to his earlier work, not because his poetical powers were already waning, but because, in these hymns occasional, temporal, and personal, his art is made subordinate to practical ends. Herbert had demonstrated that poetry might deal with every act of the religious life: Wither tried to show that since every act or occupation ought to be religious, it might be made the occasion of a religious poem. The result was pious, but, on the whole, prosaic; most of Wither's hymns in *Hallelujah* fail to stir the imagination because they are based upon trivial occurrences or frivolous distinctions. It is only when he touches a fact of vital and universal significance —*e.g.* motherhood—that he writes a beautiful poem.[1] And this is true of all Wither's subsequent verse. He never lost the power to write poetry, but he stifled it in order to write morality. The best general appreciation of his work is Charles Lamb's essay.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—FLETCHER, GILES: *Complete Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart (Fuller's Worthies, 1868, o.p.).—FLETCHER, PHINEAS: *Poems*, ed. A. B. Grosart (Fuller's Worthies, 1869, o.p.).—*The Poetical Works of Giles and Phineas Fletcher* (2 vols., Cambridge University Press, 1908–9).—DRUMMOND, WILLIAM: *Poems*, ed. W. C. Ward (2 vols., Muses' Library, Routledge, 1894).—BROWNE, WILLIAM: *Poems*, ed. G. Goodwin (2 vols., Muses' Library, Routledge, 1894).—WITHER, GEORGE: *Poems* (2 vols., Muses' Library, Routledge).

Studies.—GOSSE, E.: *The Jacobean Poets* (Murray, 1894).

[1] See *A Cradle Song*, I. 50.

SECTION IV
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The patriotic unity of the country under Elizabeth did not survive the queen's death; and James I. had not reigned long before England found itself in the midst of that conflict which had indeed been adumbrated in Elizabeth's time and was only held in abeyance by the great personal influence wielded by the queen herself. The long struggle between King and Parliament grew continuously more bitter as the 17th century proceeded, and came to its climax with the execution of Charles I. in 1649. The struggle was in part political and in part religious. To such men as Pym and Hampden it was the legal aspect of the king's claims that appealed with most force; while others, of whom Cromwell and Milton may be regarded as representative figures, were profoundly inspired by the religious, moral, and social aspects of the struggle. On the one side were the king, Laud, and Strafford, with their theories of divine right—honest if short-sighted men, unyielding advocates of authority and orderly government in Church and State; on the other side were the defenders of popular privileges against unchecked prerogative, and of a sternly logical Protestantism against an Arminianism which seemed to them but a version of the hated Popery. Both sides were in grim and stubborn earnest, and the country suffered the disturbance and distraction of a civil war fought for an idea. England was sharply divided, class against class. Generally speaking, the aristocracy and their dependents were Cavaliers; the commercial and trading classes in the main supported Parliament. The Puritans were especially strong in London and the eastern counties, the king's men were in a majority in the remoter districts of the north and west. Yet it should be noted that the armies engaged were small, and the causes of the quarrel little interested the mass of the people, who had no love for the extreme views of either side.

The growth of Puritanism, however, had important consequences on the social and literary life of the nation. Not because the Puritans were ever strong numerically; this they were not, except locally; but their leaders were men of a character at once strong and serious, calmly determined and obstinately fanatical. Their energy and ability made them the dominant figures in Parliament, overwhelming the apostles of compromise like Hyde and Falkland. They were not cowed by persecution, and

they did not recoil from the sternest deeds, such as the execution of Strafford and Laud, when their ideas of patriotic duty demanded them. They were especially hostile to the theatre, as we may read in Prynne's famous *Histriomastix* (1632), and an early Act of the Long Parliament decreed the complete closure of all dramatic performances in 1642. This was the final blow to the languishing Elizabethan drama. Art and literature came under a similar suspicion, except in so far as they were didactic in intention. It is thus natural that no great national literature throve during the period of Puritan ascendancy or under its influence. The Caroline lyrists were Cavaliers, as were such prose-writers as Taylor, Browne, and Fuller. The Cavalier, while he could be serious like Taylor, Herbert, and Herrick (sometimes), was in the main a human creature, interested in worldly concerns such as love-making and sport. But Milton scarcely wrote a line that could be called humorous; the claims of literature upon his muse were almost entirely superseded by the demands of his stern life-purpose. The fact that he, while in the prime of his life, during the period 1640–60, wrote no poetry to speak of, and confined himself to embittered controversy in prose, is of itself a sufficient commentary on the artistic sterility of those twenty years.

Cromwell's government was undoubtedly highly efficient, but it was after all a military despotism, and the ideal of freedom expressed in Milton's *Areopagitica* was imperfectly understood even among the most enlightened of the Puritan party. The people as a whole chafed under tyrannous edicts that made their simple sports and amusements a crime. Cromwell's success abroad did not atone for the irritating presence of his major-generals. He and all that he stood for became bitterly unpopular, and it is not remarkable that, when death at last removed his iron hand, and when the country had tasted the discomforts of unsettled government, there was a general welcome to the exiled Charles. After revolution came the inevitable reaction. The Puritans had asked too much of human nature, and writers in particular rejoiced when Charles showed himself a man of the world, and a man also of some literary taste.

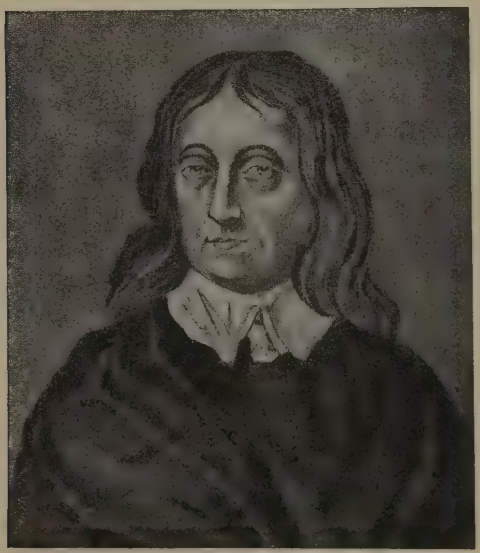
Charles II. was of a temper tolerant and broad-minded, and he had great charm of person and manner; but he was dissolute, cynical, and unprincipled, and his court soon became as scandalous as it was gay. To literature he was, according to his lights, a useful friend. No doubt he preferred wit and sparkle to imagination and ecstasy; the rhetoric of Dryden's dramas and the impudent satire of *Hudibras* were more pleasing to him than a dozen *Paradise Losts*. He liked to have his feet on the earth, and never wished to lift his head above the clouds. His ideas were drawn from the French literary circle around Louis XIV.; and he learned from them the superiority of the French writers in the matter of clear and well-balanced expression. In fostering a taste for such plain and unambiguous writing he did English prose an immense service and our poetry no lasting harm. When the theatres were reopened, it was with two types of play that were new to our literature: the heroic drama with its echoes, somewhat faint, of Corneille; and the

comedy of manners, witty, licentious, sparkling in dialogue but weak in individual characterization, which ripened in Congreve. In their various ways both these types are of strong literary and social interest; but even when they resound in Dryden's best verse, they are essentially prosaic. The characteristic work of the age is either prose in itself or in conception. No age has pictured itself more vividly than this unimaginative epoch has done in the two famous diaries of Pepys and Evelyn. There we can read what men did, what men thought about, and what they felt; and behold, it is all prose—humdrum and commonplace, by no means strait-laced, but of extraordinary interest. The writings of the divines tell the same tale. If Charles enjoyed the sermons of a South or a Tillotson, he enjoyed much sound and serious reasoning couched in sonorous language—but, again, prose—real prose. We do not imagine that he read Bunyan, but his people did; and it must be counted to them for righteousness that they still clung to imaginative prose which had a lucidity and force that no court inspired. Finally, we have to credit Charles with his encouragement of science through the foundation of the Royal Society (1661). The work of this famous institution is a memorial more lasting than bronze to Charles's tastes. We should not be far wrong, perhaps, in asserting that, along with Milton, Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke are the most important personages, for the world and humanity as a whole, of the 17th century in England.

The fate of James II. is sufficient evidence that Englishmen were by no means prepared to sacrifice the solid results of the Puritan Revolution, and it brings more clearly to light the worldly wisdom of his brother. In the literary sense, the last years of the century give us merely the ripe fruit from the seeds sown at the Restoration.

Chapter 2. JOHN MILTON (1608–74)

Life.—*Youth*, 1608–32. Born in London, the son of a scrivener, a man of literary and musical tastes and Protestant views, and, as his son says, marked by "the wonderful integrity of his life," Milton was sent to St. Paul's School, and thence in 1625 to Christ's College, Cambridge. He intended to take holy orders; it was not till after 1632 that he found himself out of sympathy with the Anglican hierarchy, and resolved to devote himself to a poet's life. His Latin epistles to his friend Diodati (1626–7–9) show him as a gentle and sociable youth, a lover of music, dancing, women, books, plays, and country pleasures; at the same time studious, religious, high-minded, and modest. Though he wrote in 1629 *The Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, he thought himself as slow to reach maturity of mind as he was to reach the semblance of manhood. In 1631 he wrote:



John Milton.

> My hasting dayes flie on with full career,
> But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.

Country Life and Travel, 1632–9. Leaving Cambridge in 1632, he went to live at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, where his father had bought a house. Six years of studious seclusion were broken by occasional visits to London "to buy books or learn something new in mathematics or in music." Soon after settling at Horton he wrote *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. His friendship with Henry Lawes, the musician, led to the composition of *Arcades* as part of an entertainment given by the family of the dowager Countess of Derby at Harefield in 1634, and of a *Maske*, since known as *Comus*, acted by the family of the Earl of Ellesmere, Lady Derby's stepson and son-in-law, at Ludlow Castle in the same year. In 1637 the death of his Cambridge acquaintance Edward King occasioned the writing of *Lycidas*. In 1638 he set out for a tour in France and Italy. He seems to have designed

two years' travel, but returned after fifteen months because the news of the Scottish troubles made him think that the fight for freedom was about to begin.

Political and Social Work, 1640–60. Settling in London, he took pupils and wrote pamphlets on the controversies of the hour. In 1643 he married Mary Powell, daughter of an Oxfordshire Cavalier, so ill-sorted a match that within a few weeks the wife returned to her parents and the husband sat down to write two pamphlets in favour of divorce. These he published without licence, and action taken against him by the Stationers' Company and the House of Commons led him to compose *Areopagitica*, or a *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicenced Printing*. In 1645 the ruin of the Cavalier cause made his wife's friends desire her to return to him. With some hesitation he received her, and soon afterwards gave shelter to her parents and sisters. In the years 1646–52 three daughters were born to him, and his wife died in the last year. In 1647 his father's death had left him with means enough to give up pupils. In 1649 the publication of his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* was followed by his appointment to be Latin secretary to the new Council of State. He once more threw himself fiercely into controversy, defending the regicides and assailing their opponents. His eyesight had for some time been failing, and he now (1653) knew that unless he abandoned writing he must go blind. He chose blindness, and justified his choice in the sonnet which ends

They also serve who only stand and waite.

His blindness did not end his labours as a champion of the Independents; the last of his works in the cause, a defence of republicanism, appeared in 1660. In 1656 he married again, but his wife lived little more than a year. At the Restoration he went into hiding in the City, but was arrested there. He seems to have found influential friends, and the Indemnity Act freed him from danger, but his income was very much reduced.

Retirement: Great Poems, 1661–74. He continued living in London, and in 1663 made a happy third marriage. As early as 1641 he had settled on the Fall of Man as the subject of his epic, and he seems to have set to work on the poem in 1658. Phillips says that some parts were already written, the speech of Satan [1] as early as 1642. Completed about 1663, *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1667 as a poem "written in ten books," and the second edition, "a poem in twelve books," in 1674. In 1671 *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes* appeared together. Milton's health was now breaking, and his life was clouded by differences with his daughters; but he published some few books in prose and a collected edition of his early poems. He died quietly on November 8, 1674, and was buried in St. Giles's, Cripplegate.

Chief Poetical Works.—*Hymn on the Nativity* (1629); *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (1633); *Arcades* (1634); *A Maske* (*Comus*), (1634); *Lycidas* (1637); *Paradise Lost*

[1] *Paradise Lost*, IV. 32–113.

(1667); *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes* (1671). *The Hymn on the Nativity*, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso* were not published until 1645.

Character.—Milton cannot without much qualification be called a Puritan. If bred a Calvinist he was also bred a humanist, and all his life he kept both characteristics. To Diodati in 1637 he wrote: "Whatever the Deity may have bestow'd upon me in other respects, He has certainly inspired me, if any ever were inspired, with a passion for the good and the beautiful." In his earlier years the love of the beautiful was the stronger influence; in his last years, though the Puritanic idea of goodness was foremost in his mind, yet, when he set himself to

> feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move
> Harmonious numbers,[1]

his meditations were not only on Sion but hardly less on "blind Mæonides," on the poets of Greece and Rome. His intellectual and artistic greatness, if they came mainly from his humanist side, were also fostered by the moral earnestness and intenseness which came from his Puritanism, while in morals it was to this Puritanism that he owed alike his virtues and his defects. The hardness which did not spare his own children, the intolerance which could see but one road into the Kingdom of Heaven, the ferocity, such as that with which he lashed Salmasius, the contempt for sinners and for weaklings, sprang from rebellion against the formalism which seemed to go hand in hand with levity; and from the same rebellion came the passion for virtue, the devotion to duty, the elevation of principle, the lofty hatred of sin, which place him among the greatest of mankind.

Works.—*The Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* is the earliest poem of any length. The skilful construction shows that Milton was already an artist, and the learning that he was a poet rather of the study than of the market-place or the field. The work is marked by some conceits and fantasies characteristic of the age, but absent from Milton's maturer poems. The blend of Christian and classical thought remained with him to the end.

Of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* "opinion is uniform," as Johnson said. "Every man that reads them reads them with pleasure." They are a quintessence of happy English life; and in them the poet reveals his own temperament as a typical but richly gifted one. The contrast in these poems is not so much of two characters as of two moods. Under one influence a man seeks light-hearted mirth. He delights in the cheerful sights and sounds of the morning, in the haytime and the harvest, in the simple feasts of the country folk. If he has left the country for the town, his pleasure is in pomps and pageants, in sumptuous weddings, in comedies and masques. Under the other influence he loves the quietude of the country,

[1] *Paradise Lost*, iii. 37.

the trim garden in the repose of evening, the study of astronomy and philosophy, the sterner side of poetry and the more religious notes of music.

> But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high-embowèd roof,
> With antic pillars massy-proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light :
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voic'd quire below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all heav'n before mine eyes.

For Milton, in these years of his happiness, his ears and eyes were the gateways of heaven ; religion was an ecstasy and not an argument. It was political strife which robbed him of all that.

Arcades and *A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle*, the poem usually known as *Comus*, were written for the private stage and the music of Henry Lawes. Appearing after the publication of Prynne's *Histriomastix*, they show that Milton did not share the view of extreme Puritanism that a drama is an evil thing in itself. Not the use of the dramatic form but its misuse was the evil. Milton was deeply read in the Attic tragedians and the Jacobean playwrights, and he would not throw Euripides and Jonson to the wolves, nor could his contempt for the coarser side of Shakespeare make him deaf to the " native Wood-notes wilde." But the drama had been misused, and he would show a more excellent way. For the " sweet poyson of mis-used Wine " he would substitute the wholesomeness of a modest draught. From Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* he took a story of a girl lost in a wood, where she is caught by a magician and rescued by her brothers. To the magician he gave the name of " Comus," as a personification of revelry, and Circe's power of changing men into beasts. Further, as the scene of the play is in Shropshire woods, he brings in Sabrina, the nymph of the Severn, to complete the work of the brothers and end the masque in happiness. This is the most flawless of Milton's poems. It has been rightly called " a eulogy of virtue." The lady and her gallant brothers are strong in the nobility of their goodness. The lady in the face of danger is justified in her belief that

> he, the Supreme good, t' whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistring Guardian if need were
> To keep my life and honour unassail'd. (217 *et seq.*)

The magician can have no complete or lasting power over her, and she truly says to him :

> Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde
> With all thy charms, although this corporal rinde
> Thou haste immanacl'd, while Heav'n sees good. (664 *et seq.*)

Perhaps Comus and his troop stand for the fashionable world of the time, by which the king's domestic propriety was not taken as an example. Certainly the lady and her brothers present the ideal of the nobler Puritans wherein grandeur of thought and sanctity of life go hand in hand. The poem is Milton's first exercise in blank verse.

Lycidas is a monody on the death by drowning of Milton's college acquaintance Edward King. In form it follows the monodies of the Greek pastoral poets, but in substance belongs to a class of poem in which, beside Milton, perhaps only Virgil and Matthew Arnold have been really great. The monodies of Bion and Moschus were transcriptions from real life or embodiments of stories familiar to Sicilian shepherds. Some of Virgil's pastorals are of this kind; in others the pastoral form is no more than a framework into which he fits his views on life and art, on the beauty of friendship and the aims of statecraft. The apparent incongruities are brought into perfect harmony by the thought which lies behind them and for which they provide the most beautiful expression. It is no valid objection to *Lycidas* that we have in it the myths of the ancient world, the teachings of Christianity, and the political and ecclesiastical problems of Milton's own time. The poet does not forget the occasion, for the facts of King's life and death are sufficiently set forth; and it is the very character of the dead man that leads his friend to denounce the disciplinary formalism which in his eyes was taking the place of religion in the English Church. Thus there is precision in the note added in the edition of 1645, in which Milton says that he "by occasion foretels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height." The poet's native severity grew sterner and sterner as a protest against the fatuities of the leading men in the State and in the Church:

Statue of John Milton in front of St. Giles's, Cripplegate.

> Blind mouthes! that scarce themselves know how to hold
> A sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least
> That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs! (119 *et seq.*)

In his Sonnets Milton, rejecting the form preferred by Shakespeare, returned

to that of Petrarch, already followed in English by Drummond, Stirling, and others. Five of the earlier of them are in the Italian tongue. Some of them, notably those addressed to Lawrence and to Cyriack Skinner, are composed in the mood of Horace, while others are suggested by passing circumstances and serve as outlets to the deep poetic feeling which only awaited leisure for the making of a greater work. In one sonnet Milton soars to a height for which the narrow limits of the verse seem barely adequate. It fell to him as Latin secretary to pen the protest of Cromwell against the Duke of Savoy's pitiless cruelty to the Waldenses. Unable to express in an official document the divine anger by which he was fired, he wrote the lines *On the late Massacker in Piemont*, generally recognized as the mightiest sonnet in any tongue. Great as the poem is, it would perhaps have been greater if the poet's indignation had been limited to the crimes committed, but it was not in his nature to suppress on such an opportunity his ever-growing hatred of the Church of Rome.

"Paradise Lost."—In choosing for his great epic the subject of the Fall of Man, Milton supposed that he was building on an immutable foundation. It was his aim to eschew the fictitious element which he saw in the themes of the great epic and dramatic works of ancient Greece. He could not foresee an age to which the story of Adam should appear no less mythical than the tales of Achilles and Orestes. It was an unfortunate choice so far as it diverted him from themes of everlasting interest, the passions and purposes of man. He had at once a poet's and a critic's admiration for the dramas of Æschylus and Euripides; but he held that there was something lacking in them, and the very ambition to supply the want has made him introduce an element which deprives his own work of a freshness which is still unimpaired in the tragedies of the Athenian poets. His purpose is set forth in the prelude. It was to

> assert Eternal Providence
> And justifie the wayes of God to men. (I. 25.)

He contrasts this theme with such as had hitherto been accounted proper to the epic:

> Since first this Subject for Heroic Song
> Pleas'd me long choosing, and beginning late
> Not sedulous by Nature to indite
> Warrs, hitherto the onely Argument
> Heroic deem'd, chief maistrie to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights
> In Battels feign'd; the better fortitude
> Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom
> Unsung. (IX. 25 *et seq.*)

His method of composition would in itself show that the subject exactly fitted his genius. His verse was not hammered out as verse, but was the spontaneous product of previous thought. It was his way to

feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal Note. (III. 37 *et seq.*)

More than once he emphasizes this spontaneity:

If answerable style I can obtaine
Of my Celestial Patroness, who deignes
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
And dictates to me slumbring, or inspires
Easie my unpremeditated Verse. (IX. 19 *et seq.*)

The form of this unpremeditated verse, though it owed some debt to the latest dramas of Shakespeare, had of its own an incomparable stateliness whose sound expresses the stateliness of the poet's mind.

Though Milton at first designed a drama, the story of the Fall of Man does not offer many characters for the stage, while the supernatural element could with difficulty have been presented on the boards. The speech of Satan which begins

O thou that with surpassing Glory crowned, (IV. 32.)

was written before the design of a drama had been given up; Dryden went so far as to say that Satan is the hero of the poem, and unquestionably the character of Satan is the most dramatic in the work. The nobler side of the fallen angel, the stern republicanism, the unshaken heroism,

And courage never to submit or yield, (I. 108.)

are characteristics of Milton himself, and in part at least of the nation to which he belonged. But in discarding the dramatic for the epic form the poet puts both the characters and the story into the second place. The story of the Fall becomes a vehicle for the conception of sublimity which was in his mind; but, since for that sublimity Earth is an insufficient field, Heaven and Hell must be added. Chronologically the tale begins with the begetting of Messiah, which provoked the rebellion of Satan and his associates. Their defeat and expulsion from Heaven transfers the scene to Hell, where they build their palace of Pandemonium. There follows the creation of the Earth, which gives Satan the prospect of revenge. He travels to the Earth, and by his successful temptation of Eve brings about the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise. They are comforted with the assurance that hereafter Messiah shall return,

to reward
His faithful, and receave them into bliss,
Whether in Heav'n or Earth, for then the Earth
Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
Then this of *Eden*, and far happier daies. (XII. 461 *et seq.*)

As the yielding to temptation had brought the Fall of Man, so in *Paradise Re*

gain'd Milton presents the foiling of temptation as the cause of man's restoration. The death of Christ would have been a less fitting counterpart to the earlier poem and could hardly have been made the subject of an epic. In the theme of *Paradise Lost* there is unity, but not simplicity. Milton's taste, growing ever simpler, preferred *Paradise Regain'd*, because its theme has simplicity as well as unity. But this simplicity is not attained without cost. The wilderness, the scene of the temptation, is no equivalent to Heaven and Hell and Paradise, nor can it provide the poet with the sublimity of sense and sound which fitted the scenery of *Paradise Lost*. It fits better with such simple pictures as that of an old man,

> Following, as seem'd, the quest of some stray Ewe,
> Or wither'd sticks to gather; which might serve
> Against a Winters day when winds blow keen,
> To warm him wet return'd from field at Eve. (I. 315 *et seq.*)

In so far as the subject of *Paradise Lost* is the eternal conflict between good and evil, the later poem is a repetition of the theme and shows the truth of the old Greek proverb that "twice is impossible." Milton's additions to the Biblical story are not happy. The temptation to hunger appears twice, and there is a false note in the apparatus of the second,

> A Table, richly spred, in regal mode,
> With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
> And savour. (II. 339 *et seq.*)

The second temptation, the appeal to ambition, takes several forms and makes the soundest part of the poem. The third is so slightly treated that the poet may be taken not to have understood it.

"Samson Agonistes."—For his last poem Milton took a hero whose physical affliction was the same as his own. More than this, the case of *Samson Agonistes* was as the case of Milton and the cause for which he had lived. Puritanism was fallen from power but not wholly from hope. It might still save its life, though by no other way than by losing it. If it be true that whatsoever was noblest in Puritanism has passed into modern English life, Milton was justified in his confidence, but at the moment he could not express it except in an allegorical form. His allegory takes the shape of a drama which essays to follow the lines of the Attic tragedians. Samson, a prisoner at Gaza, and deeply ashamed of the weakness that has ruined him, is visited by a company of his countrymen, who form the chorus, and by his father, who desires to ransom him. Samson himself feels that death were a better end to his sufferings and his disgrace. Confronted with his traitress wife Dalila and the giant Harapha, an Æschylean type of brainless strength, he shows that he is morally greater than in the day of his triumphs. Summoned to make sport for the Philistines he at first refuses, but afterwards, conscious that his strength was come back to him and that by going he might get the chance of doing "some great

act," he consents. It is left to the messenger to describe how by destroying the temple and the worshippers he vindicates the cause of Jehovah against Dagon. And Manoah, in his final speech, seems to utter the poet's own fierce hope of the ultimate triumph of national righteousness.

> Come, come; no time for lamentation now,
> Nor much more cause. Samson hath quit himself
> Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished
> A life heroic, on his enemies
> Fully revenged—hath left them years of mourning . . .
> And which is best and happiest yet, all this
> With God not parted from him, as was feared,
> But favouring and assisting to the end:
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—MILTON, JOHN: *Poetical Works*, ed. H. C. Beeching (Clarendon Press, 1900); ed. D. Masson (3 vols., Macmillan, 1890); *Prose Works* (5 vols., Bell).

Studies.—MASSON, DAVID: *Life of Milton* (6 vols., Macmillan, 1873–80).—PATTISON, MARK: *Milton* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1879).—GARNETT, R.: *Milton* (Great Writers, W. Scott, 1890).—BAILEY, JOHN: *Milton* (Home University Library, Williams & Norgate, 1913).—BRIDGES, R.: *Milton's Prosody* (Clarendon Press, rev. ed., 1921).—RALEIGH, W.: *Milton* (Arnold, 1900).—NEWBOLT, Sir HENRY: *A New Study of English Poetry* (Constable, 1917).

Chapter 3. THE LATER WRITERS OF GREAT PROSE

The Character-writers and Early Essayists—Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*—Milton's Prose Works—Sir Thomas Browne: *Religio Medici, Urn-burial, Christian Morals*, etc.—Jeremy Taylor: *Holy Living, Holy Dying, Sermons, Contemplations*—Izaak Walton—Historians, Writers of Memoirs, etc.: Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Clarendon—*Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*

THE CHARACTER-WRITERS

Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, and Jeremy Taylor, with whose works the great old prose came to a magnificent end, were preceded by a number of writers who in form and style have closer affinities to the essayists, journalists, and even the novelists of a later era.

BISHOP HALL (1574–1656).—Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608) was published the same year as Dekker's *Belman of London*, and a year before *The Guls Hornboke*. There are character-drawing, portraiture of manners, and moralization in both writers; but the learned Hall composed his work on a much more formal plan than that of the pamphleteer. The future Bishop of Exeter and Norwich had published his Juvenalian satire *Virgidemiarum* in 1597, giving in rhyme portraits of moral and immoral types of the same kind as his later prose characters. Another satire, *Mundus Alter et Idem* (1605), was in Latin. He now adopted the plan of Theophrastus, merely entitling his essays "Of the Humble Man" or "Of a Valiant Man," instead of the names of personal qualities used by the Lesbian philosopher. Of an honest man he says:

> He looks not to what he might do, but what he should. Justice is his first guide, the second law of his actions is expedience. He had rather complain than offend, and hates sin more for the indignity of it than the danger. His simple uprightness works in him that confidence which ofttimes wrongs him, and gives advantage to the subtle, when he rather pities their faithlessness than repents of his credulity. He hath but one heart, and that lies open to sight; and were it not for discretion, he never thinks aught whereof he would avoid a witness.

The resemblance to Bacon's aphoristic style in the *Essays* is patent, but in place of detached thoughts and abrupt transitions, there is an orderly sequence, if nothing to compare with Bacon's flashes of insight and radiating wisdom. The piquancy of the satirist is, of course, better seen in the characterisations of vices, as of ambition, which

> is a proud covetousness, a dry thirst of honour, the longing disease of reason, an aspiring and gallant madness. The ambitious climbs up high and perilous stairs, and never cares how to come down; the desire of rising hath swallowed up his fear of a fall.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.—Less academical, not less pungent, and far more homely in flavour are the *Characters* of Sir Thomas Overbury, published in 1614, a year after his death, but very likely written before those of Hall. The original edition contained twenty-one characters, "written by himselfe and other learned Gentlemen his Friends"; and as the collection grew in successive editions, the existence of a coterie interested in ethical questions and culture is clearly revealed.

The Overbury character is not, however, limited to the moral or immoral type. Among the best portraits are those of an ostler, an host, a serving-man, a braggadocio Welshman, and this short one, "A Pedant":

> He treads in a rule, and one hand scans verses, and the other holds his sceptre. He dares not think a thought that the nominative case governs not the verb; and he never had meaning in his life, for he travelled only for words. His ambition is criticism, and his example Tully. He values phrases, and elects them by the sound, and the eight parts of speech are his servants. To be brief, he is a Heteroclite, for he wants the plural number, having only the single quality of words.

The more personal Overbury touch is seen best in longer characters, like "An Ordinary Widow," who "is like the herald's hearse-cloth; she serves to many funerals, with a very little altering the colour," or "A Very Woman":

> A dough-baked man, or a She meant well towards man, but fell two bows short, strength and understanding. Her virtue is the hedge, modesty, that keeps a man from climbing over into her faults. She simpers as if she had no teeth but lips; and she divides her eyes, and keeps half for herself, and gives the other to her neat youth.

A good pendant to this is "A Good Woman," or the charming "Fair and Happy Milkmaid," the ending of which is quoted in a well-known passage of Walton's *Compleat Angler:*

> Thus lives she, and all her care is that she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.

JOHN EARLE, BRETON, CLEVELAND, AND BUTLER.—There were numerous books of Characters after Hall and Overbury, some in the one style, some in the other. In the philosophic manner of Hall were the portraits by John Earle (and perhaps others) in *Microcosmographie, or a Piece of the World discovered* (1628). Earle is sober and serious.

> A contemplative man is a scholar in this great university the world; and the same his book and study. He cloisters not his meditations in the narrow darkness of a room, but sends them abroad with his eyes, and his brain travels with his feet.

Earle's humour is not very biting. A surgeon

> differs from a physician as a sore does from a disease, or the sick from those that are not whole, the one distempers you within, the other blisters you without. He complains of the decay of valour in these days, and sighs for that slashing age of sword and buckler; and thinks the law against duels was made merely to wound his vocation.

Nicholas Breton, in the dedication to Sir Francis Bacon of his *Characters upon*

Essays, Moral and Divine (1615), had the critical insight to point out that character-writing was but an imitation or development of what Bacon had done in the *Essays;* and in a second book, *The Good and the Bad* (1616), described "the worthies and unworthies of this age" in a conceited style as affected as that of *Euphues.* The popularity of the form is evinced by the number of anonymous collections, like *Micrologia,* by R. M. (1618), *Whimzies* (1631), and *The Times Anatomized,* by T. F. (1646).

Samuel Butler's "Characters."—In the strife of King and Parliament, the character-essay became polemical. It is this in the hands of John Cleveland, and more brilliantly so in those of the author of *Hudibras.* Samuel Butler was as trenchant in his prose portraits as in his verse. "A degenerate noble" "is like a turnip, there is nothing good of him but that which is underground." "A Newsmonger"

> is a retailer of rumour that takes up upon trust and sells as cheap as he buys. He deals in a perishable commodity that will not keep; for if it be not fresh it lies upon his hands and will yield nothing. True or false is all one to him; for novelty being the grace of both, a truth grows stale as soon as a lie; and as a slight suit will last as well as a better while the fashion holds, a lie serves as well as truth till new ones come up.

ESSAYISTS

Felltham's "Resolves," Ben Jonson's "Discoveries."—The Baconian essay was the model of Owen Felltham's *Resolves* (*c.* 1620), desultory moral reflections of a not very striking order quaintly expressed. Ben Jonson's *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter* (1641) is a cross of the same breed with the mere commonplace-book, the idea of nearly every essay or casual jotting being taken and amplified from some well-known authority, especially the later classical authors. Here is one of the shorter variety:

> *Natura non effœta.*—I cannot think Nature is so spent and decayed, that she can bring forth nothing worth her former years. She is always the same, like herself; and when she collects her strength, is abler still. Men are decayed, and studies: she is not.

Selden's "Table-Talk."—With the essay may also be affiliated such a miscellany as *Table-talk, being the Discourses of John Selden,* collected after Selden's death in 1654. The learning, the breadth of mind, and the gravity of the great jurist make these disconnected utterances as well worth pondering as many that are expressed with more fascination of phrasing. These are favourable examples:

> *Question.*—When a doubt is propounded, you must learn to distinguish, and show wherein a thing holds, and wherein it does not hold. Ay, or no, never answer'd any Question. The not distinguishing where things should be distinguish'd, and the not confounding where things should be confounded, is the cause of all the mistakes in the World.
>
> *King of England.*—1. The King can do no wrong, that is no Process can be granted against him, what must be done then? Petition him, and the King writes upon the Petition *Soit droit fait,* and sends it to the Chancery, and then the business is heard. His Confessor will not tell him he can do no wrong.

2. There's a great deal of difference between Head of the Church, and Supream Governour, as our Canons call the King. Conceive it thus, there is in the Kingdom of England a Colledge of Phisicians, the King is Supream Governour of those, but not Head of them, nor President of the Colledge, nor the best Phisician.

BURTON'S "ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY"

BURTON THE MAN.—Robert Burton (1577–1640) in one vast book, which, so far as it can be said to have form at all, was a blend of desultory essays and reflections, character-sketches and commonplace-book, gave the world as rich and varied an accumulation of learning, thought, humour, and eccentric fancy as perhaps all the rest of those just considered put together. Nowhere is it truer than in Burton's case that the book is the man himself, and what kind of a man he was is fully expounded in the introductory "Democritus Junior to the Reader." He lived "a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life, *mihi et musis* in the University," a student in "the most flourishing college of Europe," Christ Church, Oxford.

> Something I have done, though by my profession a divine, yet *turbine raptus ingenii*, as he (Scaliger) said, . . . to be *aliquis in omnibus, nullus in singulis*, which Plato commends, out of him Lipsius approves and furthers, "as fit to be imprinted in all curious wits, not to be a slave of one science, or dwell together in one subject, as most do, but to rove abroad, *centum puer artium*, to have an oar in every man's boat, to taste of every dish, and sip of every cup," which, saith Montaigne, was well performed by Aristotle, and his learned countryman Adrian Turnebus. . . . I am not poor, I am not rich; *nihil est, nihil deest*, I have little, I want nothing: all my treasure is in Minerva's tower. . . . I hear and see what is done abroad, how others run, ride, turmoil, and macerate themselves in court and country, far from those wrangling lawsuits, *aulæ vanitatem, fori ambitionem, ridere mecum soleo*. . . . A mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me as from a common theatre or scene.

He goes on to tell how he

> did sometime laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was *petulanti splene cachinno*, and then again, *urere bilis jecur*, I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not mend.

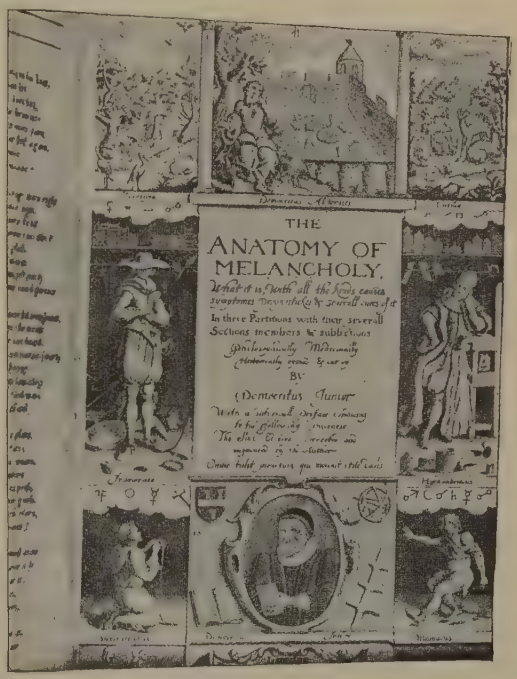
So he undertook to imitate the legendary book of Democritus on "melancholy and madness."

The Book.—We are told on the highest professional authority that *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is "a great medical treatise, orderly in arrangement, serious in purpose."[1] However that may be, the plain man is like to be confounded by its methodical array of divisions and sub-divisions, sections and sub-sections, and the literary epicure will prefer to eschew continuous reading for the inexhaustible pleasure of dipping at random into its hoards of unexpected lore. Under the ostensible subject of melancholy Burton treats of the life of man, one might almost say, the natural history of the race; "for indeed who is not a fool, melancholy, mad?"

[1] Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, IV. 245).

> Kingdoms, provinces, and politic bodies are likewise sensible and subject to this disease. . . . For where you shall see the people civil, obedient to God and princes, judicious, peaceable and quiet, rich, fortunate, and flourish, to live in peace, in unity and concord, a country well tilled, many fair built and populous cities, *ubi incolæ nitent*, as old Cato said, the people are neat, polite, and terse, *ubi bene, beateque vivunt*, which our politicians make the chief end of a commonwealth; and which Aristotle, *Polit.* lib. iii. cap. 4, calls *Commune bonum*, Polybius, lib. vi. *optabilem et selectum statum*, that country is free from melancholy; as it was in Italy in the time of Augustus, now in China, now in many other flourishing kingdoms of Europe. But whereas you shall see many discontents, common grievances, complaints, poverty, barbarism, beggary, plagues, wars, rebellions, seditions, mutinies, contentions, idleness, riot, epicurism, the land lie untilled, waste, full of bogs, fens, deserts, etc., cities decayed, base and poor towns, villages depopulated, the people squalid, ugly, uncivil; that kingdom, that country, must needs be discontent, melancholy, hath a sick body, and had need to be reformed.

Treatment of his Theme.—This long introduction goes on to depict Burton's idea of a world purged of melancholy, a utopian state, monarchical in form, with few laws, but those severely kept, with hereditary nobles, and dignities some hereditary, some conferred by election, and some for the reward of merit. Then he buckles to his main task, treating first of diseases in general, melancholy being defined as one of the nine perturbations, evil affections, or habits of the disposition, and then, with the most elaborate analysis, classification, and specification, of melancholy itself, its kinds, causes, symptoms, prognostics, and finally its cure, the subject of the second partition. A third partition, the longest of the three, treats, with the same minuteness and wealth of illustration from ancient and modern sources, and with a compelling power like that of Lucretius,[1] of love-melancholy, and a subsection of this deals with religious melancholy.



Title-page of Burton's "Anatomy."

The universality of Burton's mind is exhibited, not solely in the wealth of quotation, which suggests that he had indexed the contents of the Bodleian, but in his knowledge of men and their inner and outer life. His preface speaks truly and without exaggeration. Nothing human was without interest to him. He is

[1] In the fourth book of *De Rerum Natura*.

psychologist, satirist, and humorist; equal as a portrayer of the mind to all the rest of the character-writers, and far beyond them as a meditative philosopher reviewing human ills and teaching the way of alleviation.

Influence. — Five editions came out during Burton's lifetime, and instead of writing other books he devoted the twenty years from the first edition till his death to adding fresh material, inserting references, and revising the work. The *Anatomy* has played an interesting part in literary history since. Sterne plagiarized from it unscrupulously; Lamb saturated himself with Burton's thought and style; Keats was familiar with the book, and got the germ of *Lamia* from a well-known passage. But to catalogue the men of letters who have been Burton's devotees would be like cataloguing the poets who have read and emulated Spenser.

Barclay's "Argenis."—The same year as *The Anatomy of Melancholy* there appeared in Latin a curious political romance by a young Scottish scholar born at Pont-à-Mousson. *Argenis, or the Loves of Polyarchus and Argenis*, as it is entitled in the earliest of the three English translations, is an allegorical romance with a political under-meaning. Sicily stands for France in the time of the religious wars; Usinulca is Calvin; Hyanisbe Queen Elizabeth; the Huguenots are represented by the Hyperaphanii. Some of the disguises employed by Barclay were transparent; others were more equivocal, and even in his own day it was difficult to disentangle allegory and fact and pure fancy.

MILTON'S PROSE WORKS

Milton at the Period of the Commonwealth.—Milton's literary life falls into three distinct portions—the period of his early poems, the years from 1641 to the Restoration, devoted to public controversy and the service of the state, and the later period, of *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. With few and unimportant exceptions, his prose works belong to the middle period, and were nearly all written in the heat of contention. This circumstance tells partly for, but on the whole very much against, their interest as works of literature. On the one hand, it is obvious that the finest passages owe their sublimity to the ardour of strife and of lofty ethical appeal; on the other, the gravest party questions do not provide material for enduring literary monuments, and Milton's temper and lack of humour are answerable for dreary stretches of trivial litigiousness and still more trivial abuse. Except *Areopagitica*, few of his prose works are read now. Such as are ever read are read for their historical interest, or for the sake of those passages of immortal eloquence where the fiery passion of the imaginative orator illumines the heavy and intricate texture of his style. For of all the writers who continued to use the cumbrous involutions of Latin prose, Milton was the most uncompromising, and the least ready to lighten the path of the reader among his complicated relative clauses and enormous paragraph-sentences.

The Tractates on Prelacy and on Divorce. — His first controversy began with a tractate *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline*, and a second, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, which were answered by the satirical Bishop Hall, and followed up by a series of pamphlets defending "Smectymnuus," the professed author of a tract by five Puritan assailants of prelacy. The wrangle went on during 1641–2, and degenerated into an exchange of personal vituperation. It was followed by the tracts on divorce (1643–5), prompted by Milton's domestic troubles, but claiming the right of liberation from irksome marriage bonds on high and altruistic grounds, which he discovered in numerous passages of Scripture. The divorce pamphlets brought him into collision with the Puritans, as well as his late adversaries, who failed not to seize such an excellent opportunity for indecent innuendo.

The "Areopagitica."—Between the controversies on episcopacy and divorce and the political pamphlets of the Commonwealth period, Milton published two tractates, *On Education* and *Areopagitica* (1644), the views and style of which are more worthy of their subjects. *Areopagitica*, his reasoned plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing, is written in a style of restrained and sustained eloquence, with very few of his characteristic faults of manner and taste. This address to the Long Parliament, suggested by and named after an oration of Isocrates, contended, on the broad principles of the sanctity of truth and the high mission and responsibilities of authorship, for the removal of the censorship established in succession to that of the Star Chamber. The tone of Milton's argument may be judged from the extract printed below, the old rhetorical prose at its loftiest pitch.

Later Political Tractates.—In 1649, Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* opened his defence of the republican principles which justified the execution of Charles I. It was followed by *Eikonoklastes*, his reply to *Eikon Basilike, the Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitudes and Sufferings*, ascribed to the late king, but probably written by Bishop Gauden. Then ensued the Latin controversy with Salmasius, who had put forth a defence of the king. This was distinguished by the same preference for invective and wearisome abuse to sober reasoning as marked his earlier polemical style. The least judicious and least effective of all his pamphlets was *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, published on the eve of the Restoration, and supported by a letter to Monck deprecating a return to monarchy.

Style.—It is painful to think that Milton could fall so often and so far below the nobility of the following well-known passage from *Areopagitica :*

> I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the church and commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves, as well as men ; and therefore to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors ; for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are ; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that

bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embodied and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. It is true, no age can restore a life, whereof, perhaps, there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations do fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at the ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605–82)

Life and Character.—In 1642, while Milton was absorbed in the fierce debate on prelatical government, there appeared an unauthorized edition of a book, *Religio Medici*, which had been in existence in several manuscripts for at least seven years. The author, Dr. Thomas Browne, was a physician at Norwich, born in London, and educated at Winchester and Oxford. He had lived and practised in various parts of England, had travelled and studied on the Continent, and was now married to a Norfolk lady and comfortably settled in the county town, where he was in high repute both for his medical and general scientific attainments. It is of interest to know that in a trial of a case of witchcraft in 1664, Browne, not without protest from those of opposite views, testified to his belief in the black art. He was knighted eleven years before his death, on a visit of Charles II. to Norwich.

Sir Thomas Browne.

Works.—Browne himself published *Religio Medici* in 1643. In 1646 appeared *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* or "Vulgar Errors," as it is familiarly called, by far his longest book; in 1659, *Hydriotaphia, Urne-buriall, together with The Garden of Cyrus;* and, posthumously, *Certain Miscellaneous*

Tracts (1684), *Posthumous Works* (1712), comprising some miscellaneous letters and other items, and a long treatise, *Christian Morals* (1716).

Scholar, Antiquary, and Mystical Philosopher.—Browne's works reveal him as one of the widely learned of those days, like Burton, Milton, Taylor, and, in his own different way, Fuller—a learning which fed his imagination with the rich and curious felicities of metaphor and illustration that adorn his style. Though a Royalist by conviction, he took no part in the public controversies of his time, preferring the life of the quiet professional man, happy among his family and friends, devoting his leisure to study and self-communion, but observant of all that was going on around him. His *Urne-buriall* is evidence of his interest in antiquarian research, as well as of the far-ranging scope of his intellect. His learning was of a kind peculiar to himself, coloured throughout by his mental attitude of meditative philosopher and mystic.

Attitude to Religion.—The destructive zeal of the Puritans shocked the reverent mind of Browne, who had "no Genius to disputes in Religion." He was a modern man, in that to him religion was pre-eminently a concern of the individual soul, and by no means a matter for prescription and compulsion or any kind of intolerance of what other men revered. His resemblance to the "melancholy" Burton might be exemplified by innumerable parallels from the two men's reflections on moral and spiritual things.

The "Religio Medici."—His most characteristic book, if not the one in which his imaginative rhetoric soars to the sublimest heights, the *Religio Medici*, is a work of spiritual autobiography, as well as a great essay in mystical theology. This is the document from which we must complete our mental portrait of the man.

> Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not a History, but a piece of Poetry, and would sound to common ears like a Fable; for the World, I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital; and a place not to live, but to dye in. The world that I regard is my self; it is the Microcosm of my own frame that I cast my eye on; for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. . . . Nature tells me I am the Image of God, as well as Scripture: he that understands not thus much, hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the Alphabet of man. Let me not injure the felicity of others, if I say I am as happy as any: *Ruat cœlum, Fiat voluntas tua*, salveth all; so that whatsoever happens, it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content, and what should providence add more? Surely this is it we call Happiness, and this do I enjoy; with this I am happy in a dream, and as content to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and reality.

Method of the Book.—The first of the two parts of *Religio Medici*, in especial, might be described as a series of short essays, not disconnected, yet evidently the records of a long course of meditations rather than paragraphs in a logical sequence of argument. The author proceeds by the method of self-analysis, touching on every

aspect of the inmost life, throwing out thoughts that if not original are expressed with fascinating originality, shedding from time to time a flood of light on curious psychological phenomena, and ranging illimitable time and space on the same strong imaginative pinion as he explores the profound depths of the soul.

"Vulgar Errors."—The subject of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* made it decidedly the most popular, as it was the longest, of Browne's works, though its interest is now chiefly curious and antiquarian. The style is as charming as ever, but the daring flights of mystical fancy and the gorgeous eloquence are more rare than in the former book and the next.

Title-page of "Religio Medici."

"Hydriotaphia" and "The Garden of Cyrus."—The brief work entitled *Hydriotaphia, Urne-buriall, or a Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes lately found in Norfolk*, was the outcome of the meditations suggested by a local discovery of cinerary urns. It is a solemn disquisition on the immortality of fame, and its fifth chapter is the most continuous and impressive passage of Browne's majestic oratory. From the famous exordium:

> Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; What Prince can promise such diuturnity unto his Reliques, or might not gladly say,
>
> *Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim?*
>
> Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* Monuments. In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation and obscurity their protection . . .

to the quiet and hopeful close, it is one piece of intense vision and lofty rhetoric:

> To live indeed is to be again our selves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble beleevers; 'Tis all one to lie in St. Innocents Church-yard, as in the Sands of Ægypt: Ready to be any thing, in the extasie of being ever, and as content with six foot as the Moles of Adrianus.

The treatise on the Quincunx, entitled *The Garden of Cyrus*, is an essay in curious mystical learning, with occasional excursions into the same ethereal

regions. Its peroration reveals all the manner and mannerisms of Browne's style :

> But the Quincunx of Heaven runs low, and 'tis time to close the five ports of knowledge ; We are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into the phantasmes of sleep, which often continueth praecogitations ; making Cables of Cobwebbes and Wildernesses of handsome Groves. Beside Hippocrates hath spoke so little, and the Oneirocriticall Masters have left such frigid Interpretations from plants, that there is little encouragement to dream of Paradise it self. Nor will the sweetest delight of Gardens afford much comfort in sleep ; wherein the dulnesse of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours ; and though in the Bed of Cleopatra, can hardly with any delight raise up the ghost of a Rose.
>
> Night, which Pagan Theology could make the daughter of Chaos, affords no advantage to the description of order ; Although no lower than that Masse can we derive its Genealogy. All things began in order, so shall they end, and so shall they begin again ; according to the ordainer of order and mystical Mathematicks of the City of heaven.
>
> Though Somnus in Homer be sent to rowse up Agamemnon, I finde no such effects in the drowsy approaches of sleep. To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our Antipodes. The Huntsmen are up in America, and they are already past their first sleep in Persia. But who can be drowsie at that howr which freed us from everlasting sleep ? or have slumbring thoughts at that time, when sleep it self must end, and as some conjecture all shall awake again ?

Other Works.—There is no falling off in Browne's peculiar excellences of thought or style in *Christian Morals* or in *A Letter to a Friend upon the Death of his Intimate Friend* (1690). The whole of his works were edited with exemplary care by Wilkin (1835–6), and the *Religio Medici* and *Urne-buriall*, with ample bibliographical and other apparatus, by Dr. Greenhill (1881–96).

Style.—The Latinism of Browne's style is different from that of Hooker, Milton, and Taylor. In their writings it is the Latinized syntax that gives complexity and cumbrousness to the sentence. Sir Thomas Browne's syntax is far less cumbrous, though he clings to the old system of construction. The quick transitions of his thought, the darting gleams of his keen intellect, produce a terseness, clearness, and harmony of accent with the rhythm of thought, which, in combination, make the reader feel as if the very language were alive. But his vocabulary is heavily, even artificially, Latinized. To give a word the proper flavour, he would transform it from its vernacular shape to that of a Latin derivative. And Latin derivatives are used in not only their accepted senses, but frequently to express subtle shades of meaning for which etymology or some remote classical usage was the sole authority. No wonder such an author found it necessary to write :

> I confess the quality of the subject will sometimes carry us into expressions beyond mere English apprehensions. And indeed, if elegancy still proceedeth, and English pens maintain that stream we have of late observed to flow from many, we shall, within few years, be fain to learn Latin to understand English, and a work will prove of equal facility in either.

But, as he continues, he addressed his " pen or style not to the people, but unto the knowing and leading part of learning," and had even, at first, considered the advisability of appealing " unto the Latin republick and equal judges of Europe "

as best qualified to influence the lower regions, and thus cut off the sap and sustenance of popular error. There was thus a method, as well as a strong predilection of taste, in Sir Thomas Browne's Latin vocabulary, and in the subtlety and pregnancy of style, and the fastidiousness with which he held to the dictates of his own fine intellect, without yielding a jot to popularity or convention. This, too, justifies the audacious splendour of his use of words —an art in which he stands alone among English writers.

THE DIVINES

JEREMY TAYLOR (1613–67).—Jeremy Taylor vies with Hooker for the chief honours among English divines who have also been men of letters; not, however, as thinker or theologian, but as an inspired preacher, a devotional writer, and a moral instructor of extraordinary fervour and persuasiveness. He was one of the Royalist clergymen who suffered sequestration during the Presbyterian rule, his personal charm and his gifts in the pulpit having early impressed Archbishop Laud, who had made him one of his own chaplains. At the eclipse of the Royalist cause, he took refuge in Wales, at the seat of Lord Carbery, and there wrote most of his best work. He was reinstated at the Restoration, and rewarded with the bishopric of Down and Connor, to which was subsequently added the see of Dromore.

Works.—His works were voluminous, including various collections of sermons, treatises, discourses on rites and ceremonies, and devotional or didactic works, of which the chief are the following: *A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying* (1647), *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650), *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651), *The Measure and Offices of Friendship* (1657), and *Ductor Dubitantium*, a manual of casuistry (1660).

"Holy Living and Dying," "Sermons," etc.—Apart from the grace and clearness of his style, the same qualities that gave seduction to his sermons have saved the best of his other works from oblivion—to wit, his tenderness and compassionate insight into human weaknesses, the wealth of forcible illustration, and his way of appealing to the deepest convictions of his readers. The theology is as ingenious and unphilosophical as that of his contemporaries; the casuistry of his elaborate treatise, *Ductor Dubitantium*, is of a like order. But when he appeals to our human sympathies, the conscience, the intuitive sense of the beauty of holiness, Taylor's sagacity, sympathy, and fervour carry conviction. The tractates on *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* are classics of the religious household, most winning in their plea for sobriety, purity, contentment, justice, and charity, and powerful in their devotional enthusiasm. The same sympathetic charm pervades *The Marriage Ring*,

The Golden Grove, The Worthy Communicant, and the posthumous *Contemplations on the State of Man.*

His Prayers.—Few have rivalled Taylor as a composer of prayers. Take this from *Holy Living:*

> O eternal God, Thou alone rulest in the kingdoms of men, Thou art the great God of battles and recompenses, and by Thy glorious wisdom, by Thy almighty power, and by Thy secret providence, dost determine the events of war, and the issues of human counsels, and the returns of peace and victory: now at last be pleased to let the light of Thy countenance, and the effects of a glorious mercy and a gracious pardon, return to this land. Thou seest how great evils we suffer under the power and tyranny of war; and although we submit to and adore Thy justice in our sufferings, yet be pleased to pity our misery, to hear our complaints, and to provide us of remedy against our present calamities: let not the defenders of a righteous cause go away ashamed, nor our counsels be for ever confounded, nor our parties defeated, nor religion suppressed, nor learning discountenanced, and we spoiled of all the exterior ornaments, instruments, and advantages of piety, which Thou hast been pleased formerly to minister to our infirmities, for the interest of learning and religion. Amen.

Style.—Taylor's language is as loosely knit as his reasoning; but it is always clear, for the most part familiar in the choice of word and phrase, and free from any obstacle for the modern reader except the pedantic terms and the superfluous quotations from Latin and Greek in which the preacher of those days paraded his learning. His sentences are not complex like Hooker's and Milton's, but owe their often clumsy length to his cumulative method of illustration and argument, clause being linked to clause after clause by the conjunction "and." There was at least as much of the poet as of the orator in the emotional character of his style, and in the concrete imageries that inundated his mind, ofttimes to the confusion of grammar. He inculcated sobriety of life; but vehemence and impetuousness, self-abandonment to the inspiration of the moment, characterize his manner of teaching. When a simile occurs to him, his fancy elaborates it almost to the extent of allegory.

> But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of his hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece: but when a rude breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman. . . .

THOMAS FULLER (1608–61).—The resemblances of position and character between Taylor and Fuller serve only to emphasize their points of contrast. Both were Anglican clergymen attached to the Royalist cause; both were popular preachers, though Fuller was far from approaching the genius of Taylor. Both had the wide scholarship that impressed readers and congregations alike; but Fuller's learning was cast in paths of his own choice, and was marked by the same zest for the quaint and the far-fetched as his style. Educated at Cambridge, at twenty-three he was

made a prebendary of Salisbury, and three years later rector of Broadwindsor, Dorset. In 1642, as curate of the Savoy, he preached in favour of compromise between King and Parliament; on the failure of his efforts withdrawing to Oxford, and then taking the office of chaplain to Hopton's army. He published *Good Thoughts in Bad Times* at Exeter (1645). On the surrender of that city he returned to London, and was given special permission to preach. He died a year after the Restoration.

Works.—*The Historie of the Holy Warre* (the Crusades) was published at Cambridge in 1639. Here also appeared *The Holy State and the Profane State* (1642) lives of eminently good and eminently bad characters from history. The popular *Good Thoughts in Bad Times* (1645) was a series of reflections and "contemplations." In 1650 he published *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, on the geography and history of the Holy Land. In 1655 appeared *The Church History of Britain*, from the birth of Christ to 1648, and a year after his death *The Worthies of England* (1662), his most extensive, characteristic, and best-known work. There were a large number of sermons, tracts, and other miscellaneous works, published at different dates between these.

Antiquary, Moralist, and Preacher.—Fuller is another of those writers whom moderns read for the sake of the curiosity of their matter, their idiosyncrasies of style, in short for their oddities and humours, rather than for any intrinsic value in their learning or importance in their ideas. His *Worthies*, though unfinished, is a vast and carefully arranged treasury of miscellaneous information, historical, antiquarian, curious, often fanciful, and oftener erroneous. The plan was to give an account of eminent persons county by county. Incidentally, Fuller interpolates quantities of multifarious facts, like the following under the head of Hampshire:

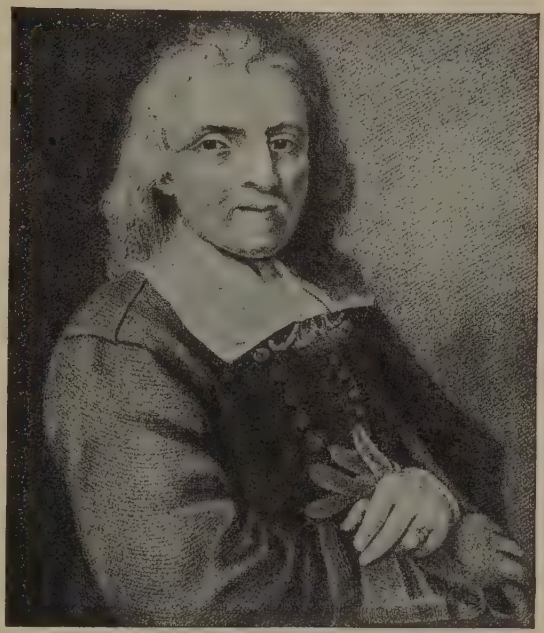
> WAX.—This is the cask, where honey is the liquor; and, being yellow by nature, is by art made white, red, and green, which I take to be the dearest colours, especially when appendant on parchment. Wax is good by day and by night, when it affordeth light, for sight the clearest; for smell the sweetest; for touch the cleanliest. Useful in law to seal instruments; and in physic, to mollify sinews, ripen and dissolve ulcers, etc. Yea, the ground and foundation of all cere-cloth (so called from *cera*) is made of wax.

Style.—Fuller's propensity for mixing jests with seriousness, giving a quaint or unexpected turn to his sentences, and seasoning the gravest discourse with puns and word-play, annoys sticklers for the dignity of literature, but is the particular delight of those who can enjoy Fuller. Dr. Field is immortalized as "that learned divine whose memory smelleth like a Field the Lord hath blessed." This is how the good widow cherishes the memory of her husband:

> If she speaks little good of him, she speaks but little of him. So handsomely folding up her discourse, that his virtues are shown outwards, and his vices wrapt up in silence; as counting it barbarism to throw dirt on his memory who hath moulds cast on his body.
>
> *The Holy and Profane State.*

IZAAK WALTON

IZAAK WALTON (1593–1683).—A London tradesman who wrote *The Compleat Angler* (1653), *Lives* of five worthies, Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert, and Dr. Robert Sanderson, who were his appreciative friends, has a niche in literary history by reason of the kindliness and simplicity of his personal character, lovable traits that shine brightly in his writings. The *Compleat Angler* has attained to a classic position in the popular literature of England comparable, though inferior, to that of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Its simple mellifluous style, its idyllic air, and the spirit of charity and gentleness which it breathes on every page make it still one of the most widely read of 17th-century works. In the *Lives* of his friends Walton attains often to a noble eloquence, and his affection for his subjects does not prevent him being an acute analyst of souls. The oft-quoted description of the angler's life sets his style and himself before us neatly and completely :



Izaak Walton.
(From the painting by Housman.)

> And let me tell you, this kind of fishing with a dead-rod, and laying night-hooks, are (*sic*) like putting money to use ; for they both work for their owners, when they do nothing but sleep, or eat, or rejoice ; as you know we have done this last hour, and sate as quietly and as free from cares under this sycamore, as Virgil's Tityrus and his Melibœus did under their broad beech-tree. No life, my honest Scholar, no life so happy and so pleasant, as the life of a well-governed Angler; for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip-banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us. Indeed, my good Scholar, we may say of Angling, as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries : " Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did : " and so, if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation, than Angling.—*The Compleat Angler.*

HISTORIANS, WRITERS OF MEMOIRS, ETC.

LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY (1583–1648).—Edward, first Baron Herbert of Cherbury, elder brother of the poet George Herbert, is of some interest in the history

of English philosophy for his Latin treatise *De Veritate*, which is a study of the relations of knowledge and reality, and sets forth a theory of "common notions" appre hended by natural instinct. Herbert had an extravagant idea of his own merits as a man of lofty character, a knight-errant beloved by women, and a redoubtable duellist. His *Autobiography* is possibly the most conceited book ever written. He speaks of his conduct in a scuffle, "I had so behaved myself, as perchance the like had not been heard in any credible way." Nevertheless, the book tells its story with admirable address, and the style is in advance of its time in clearness, ease, and vivacity.

LORD CLARENDON.—Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), was in style the last of the Elizabethans, but in the statesmanlike plan and method of his great political *History of the Rebellion*, and his searching studies of men and causes, the first of the moderns. When he entered Parliament in 1640, he stood for moderation and constitutional monarchy. But with the widening of the breach, he went over to the Royalists, and after the Restoration was made Lord Chancellor. His *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars* was begun in Jersey, in 1646, after the Royalist defeat, and completed after his own fall in 1667. It is a partisan statement from first to last, like many other great histories, and by no means of less value on that account. His narrative style is admirably vivid, his portrayal of characters at least equal to the masters of this art enumerated early in this chapter. But the greatness of his history is based on deeper grounds. It relates, as a profound lesson to future statesmen, the whole course of the struggle between Crown and Parliament, the mistakes that were made, the motives underlying them, and the personal forces arrayed on either side.

The Earl of Clarendon.
(Pepys Collection.)

Style.—A passage like the following gives a clearer idea of the historical method and the vigorous yet dignified style of Clarendon than any mere analysis:

> Both Sir Harry Vane and the solicitor general (whose opinion was of more weight with the king than the others) had made a worse representation of the humour and affection of the House than it deserved; and undertook to know that if they came together again, they would pass such a vote against Ship-money as would blast that revenue and other branches of the receipt;

which others believed they would not have had the confidence to have attempted, and very few that they would have had the credit to have compassed. What followed in the next Parliament, within less than a year, made it believed that Sir Harry Vane acted that part maliciously, and to bring all into confusion; he being known to have an implacable hatred against the Earl of Strafford, lieutenant of Ireland, whose destruction was then upon the anvil. But what transported the solicitor, who had none of the ends of the other, could not be imagined, except it was his pride and peevishness, when he found that he was like to be of less authority there than he looked to be; and yet he was heard with great attention, though his parts were most prevalent in puzzling and perplexing that discourse he meant to cross. Let their motives be what they would, they two, and they only, wrought so far with the king, that, without so much deliberation as the affair was worthy of, his Majesty the next morning, which was on the fifth of May, near a month after their first meeting, sent for the Speaker to attend him, and took care that he should go directly to the House of Peers, upon some apprehension that if he had gone to the House of Commons, that House would have entered upon some ingrateful discourse, which they were not inclined to do; and then sending for that House to attend him, the keeper, by his Majesty's command, dissolved the Parliament.—*History of the Rebellion*, Book II.

JAMES HOWELL (1596–1666).—James Howell, the versatile author of *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ* (1645–55), was an early writer of that near relative of the essay, the familiar letter, near at least when it is an artificial composition like his. He was a Welshman educated at Oxford, who had travelled much, largely on commercial or political missions, and was made historiographer-royal by Charles II. His *Familiar Letters*, to give them their alternative title, were mostly written in the Fleet, where he was confined by the Parliament. His notion of the epistolary style is propounded in the first letter:

It was a quaint difference the antients did put 'twixt a letter and an oration; that the one should be attired like a woman, the other like a man: the latter of the two is allowed large side robes, as long periods, parentheses, similes, examples, and other parts of rhetorical flourishes: but a letter or epistle should be short-coated, and closely couch'd; a hungerlin[1] becomes a letter more handsomely than a gown. Indeed we should write as we speak: and that's a true familiar letter which expresseth one's mind, as if he were discoursing with the party to whom he writes, in succinct and short terms. The tongue and the pen are both of them interpreters of the mind; but I hold the pen to be the more faithful of the two.

Howell in the vivacity of his style, which he strove to make entertaining at all costs, seems a generation at the very least ahead of the contemporaries with whom the present chapter began. But if we compare him with the writers of the generation next before, who were considered in the previous chapter on prose-writers, they appear to belong to another century altogether. The causes of change had been long at work beneath the surface, although modern prose seems to be born so suddenly; it advanced with the general realization that it had a distinct sphere of its own, and that as a mode of expression it had nothing to do with poetry but everything to do with the common language of social intercourse.

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[1] A short, furred coat, so called from its Hungarian origin.

bault (Library of Old Authors, Reeves and Turner, 1890).—SELDEN, JOHN: *Table-talk* (Temple Classics, Dent, 1898).—JONSON, B.: *Discoveries* (Temple Classics, Dent, 1896).—BURTON, R.: *Anatomy of Melancholy* (3 vols., 1893).—BUTLER, S.: *Characters and Passages from Note-books*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge University Press, 1908).—MILTON, J.: *Prose Works* (5 vols., Bell, 1872–3); *Areopagitica* (Black, 1911).—BROWNE, Sir T.: *Works*, ed. C. Sayle (3 vols., Richards, 1904–7); *Religio Medici*, ed. C. H. Herford (Everyman, Dent, 1896).—TAYLOR, JEREMY: *Holy Living* (2 vols., 1896), *Holy Dying* (Temple Classics, Dent, 1900); *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (Bohn's Library, Bell, 1920).—FULLER, T.: *Church History*, ed. J. S. Brewer (6 vols., Clarendon Press, 1845–8).—HERBERT OF CHERBURY, Lord: *Autobiography*, ed. S. Lee (Routledge, 1886; new ed. 1906).—CLARENDON, Lord: *History of the Rebellion* (6 vols., Clarendon Press, 1888).—HOWELL, J.: *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ* (3 vols., Temple Classics, Dent).

Chapter 4. JACOBEAN AND CAROLINE LYRISTS

The Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Cleveland—The Earlier Cavaliers: Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, Herrick—The Religious Poets: Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Traherne, Marvell

THE ELEVATION OF POETRY

During the last few years of the 16th century so many "base companions,' as Giles Fletcher calls them,[1] had learned to write, that lyrical poetry had become suspect. The sonneteer was no longer a pilgrim in the narrow path of chivalric sentiment, but a creature like Amoretto in the *Return from Parnassus*, an adorer of Ovid, who sleeps with Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* under his pillow, and writes "fly-blown sonnets of his mistress, and her loving pretty creatures her monkey and her puppet." To rescue poetry from the hands of such pretenders, and to restore to it its high seriousness, became the main object of the early 17th century. The most important work in this connection was done by Ben Jonson and his followers, but there were two other attempts to solve the problem. The first produced the writers whom Johnson, following Pope, called "Metaphysical."[2] Accepting the Platonic definition of the poet as an interpreter of divine mysteries, and drawing thence the corollary that the muse might become the handmaid of natural philosophy, these writers tried to ennoble poetry by applying it to the phenomena of science.

> For instructions in the Mysteries of Nature [says Reynolds][3] we must, if we will follow Plato's advice, inquire of those who lived nearest to the time of the Gods; meaning the old Ethnics, among whom the best masters were certainly most, if not all of them, poets.

The modern poet, therefore, if he was to vie with the ancients, must endeavour after the same learning. Poetry was no longer to be "a pretty toy" to win a mistress, but an arduous quest undertaken for a higher satisfaction.

> It is an exceeding rapture of delight [says Chapman][4] in the deep search of knowledge, that maketh men manfully indure the extremes incident to that Herculean labour: from flints must the Gorgonean fount be smitten.

The style, to be worthy of the subject, must be cryptic and difficult. Reynolds emphatically denies that the ancients "spoke their meaning as plain as they could," and Chapman drew from the fact a rule for modern practice.

> Obscurity in affectation of words and indigested conceits [he says][5] is pedantical and childish; but where it shroudeth itself in the heart of his subject, uttered with fitness of figure and expressive epithets, with that darkness will I still labour to be shadowed. Charms made

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1 Preface to *Licia* (1593). 2 *Life of Cowley*. 3 *Mythomystes* (1633).
4 Dedication to the *Shadow of Night* (1594).
5 Dedication to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595).

of unlearned characters are not consecrate by the Muses, which are divine artists, but by Euippe's daughters, that challenged them with mere nature [and were therefore] turned into pyes.

In short, poetry, while retaining the note of inspiration, was to convey a sense of intellectual effort. The result of this theory is to be found in the elaborate subtleties of Donne and the abrupt " strong lines " of Cleveland.

The second attempt to restore poetry was made by religious writers. Still holding to the Platonic conception of the poet, they claimed that the mysteries which he interprets could only be the mysteries of the Christian faith.

> Christ himself [says Southwell][1] by making a hymn the conclusion of his last supper, and a prologue to the first pageant of his passion, gave his Spouse a method to imitate, as in the office of the Church it appeareth ; and to all men a pattern to know the true use of this measured and footed style.

Like the " Metaphysical " poets these writers felt that a change of style was necessary. So the pious Sylvester cries :

> O furnish me with an unvulgar style,
> That by this I may wean our wanton Ile
> From Ovid's heirs and their unhallowed spell—
> Here charming senses, chaining souls in Hell.

Hence Herbert and Crashaw, who shared this aspiration, often wrote in a style as consciously elaborate as that of the Metaphysical experimenters. But they never cultivated obscurity, and they never tried to convey a sense of effort. It was not until Benlowes wrote his *Theophila* that the religious inspiration was contaminated with " Metaphysical " theory.

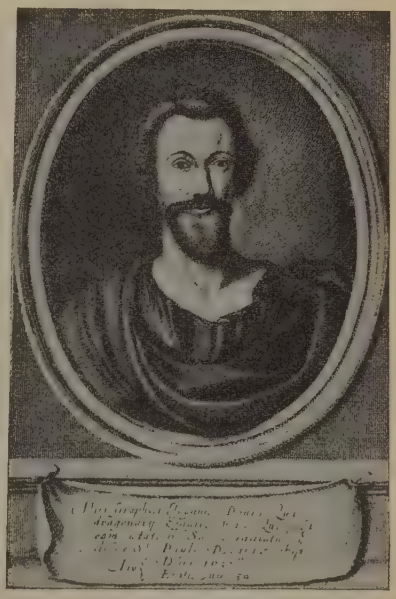
Between these two groups the earlier Cavaliers led a precarious existence. Admirers of Ben Jonson for the most part, but too careless, independent, or unscholarly to master the principles of his art, they were easily influenced by the " Metaphysical " and religious writers. They are connected with the one group by Carew's imitation of Donne, and with the other by Herrick's attempt to write religious poetry. They may therefore be placed in an intermediate position, as furnishing a link between the two.

THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

JOHN DONNE (1573–1631), the son of Roman Catholic parents, connected through his mother's family with Sir Thomas More and with John Heywood, the dramatist, was entered at Hart Hall in 1584, and at Lincoln's Inn in 1590. His first four *Satires* were written about 1594. In the next year he sailed with Essex against the Spaniards, and in 1597 went on " The Islands Voyage," incidents of which he commemorated in *The Storm* and *The Calm*. In 1601 he married clandestinely Anne More, niece of Sir Thomas Egerton, in whose household Donne now held the position of private

[1] Preface to *St. Peter's Complaint*.

secretary. For this he was dismissed, imprisoned for a time, and reduced to great distress. In 1607 Dr. Morton, Bishop of Durham, urged him to take orders in the Church. But Donne had not yet given up all hope of a place at court or in the civil service. *Biathanatos*, a defence of suicide, appeared in the next year. In 1610 he made a bid for Royal patronage with *Pseudomartyr* (a contribution to the "disputes that concerned the Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance"), *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611), a scurrilous attack on the Jesuits, an *Elegy on Prince Henry* (1612), and an *Epithalamium* for the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth (1613). In this year, to gain the goodwill of the Earl of Somerset, James's favourite, who wished to marry the Countess of Essex, Donne took a desperate course. He used his legal knowledge to support the suit of nullity which the lady brought against her husband; and when the suit was successful, actually wrote an *Epithalamium* for her marriage to Somerset. Donne had staked everything on a single throw, and in winning he had lost. When Somerset, to fulfil his obligations, urged James to make Donne clerk of the Council, the royal purpose was discovered to be fixed. "Mr. Donne is a learned man," said the king, "and will prove a powerful preacher; and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way I will deny you nothing for him."



John Donne.
(S. Kensington Museum.)

James had his flashes of insight, and on this occasion he did a wise thing. For Donne's hesitation to take orders had been due not so much to a stricken conscience as to an excessive subtlety in his method of self-examination. The shock of the king's ultimatum revealed him to himself. He was ordained in 1615, became the royal chaplain, and in 1616 was given the living of Keyston in Huntingdonshire. On the death of his wife in 1617 he betook himself for a time "to a most retired and solitary life," from which he ultimately emerged to be one of the greatest English preachers and a religious poet of great power. He was made Dean of St. Paul's in 1621, and enjoyed the living of St. Dunstan's in the West from 1624 to his death in 1631.

Izaak Walton's charming *Life of Donne* presents a one-sided view of his character, because the two men only became acquainted in 1628. Donne's secular poems, the best of which, according to Ben Jonson, were written before he was twenty-five, and of which in later life he "repented highly," preserve a side of his

character which Walton never knew. They were collected and published by his son in 1633.

Poetry.—The inductive method advocated by Descartes and Bacon in the spheres of philosophy and science was first applied by Donne to the problems of love. Throwing aside the chivalric love doctrine, which had become at best a piece of fantastic learning and at worst a dishonest pose, he set himself to discover the laws of the heart by scrutinizing the emotions themselves. "If we o'erlick our love," he says in the 19th *Elegy*,

> And force it new strange shapes to take,
> We err, and of a man a monster make.
> Were not a calf a monster, that were grown
> Faced like a man, though better than its own?

It is this quasi-scientific attitude to the problem, this determination to find what is natural, that separates him from contemporary poets. The glib Platonism of Elizabeth's court disgusted him (*Satire I.*), and in his sullen humour he liked to think that the royal virgin herself, so often addressed in terms of blasphemous adulation by breathless poetasters, had more in common than was generally supposed with a wolf, a fish, a gull, and a little cock sparrow.[1] The subsequent discovery that she was, as a matter of fact, most closely related to the anthropoid apes, must not be allowed to obscure the serious value of Donne's surmise. He had not discovered Darwinism, but he had discovered the feminine interest. "Every woman is a science," he says in the fourth *Paradox*, "for he that plods upon a woman all his life long shall in the end find himself short in his knowledge of her." Such a sentence marks the change from ancient to modern sentiment, from the gallery of embalmed perfections that fill the mediæval romance and the Renaissance sonnet-sequence, to Cleveland's mistress, who was "the metaphysics of her sex," to Millamant, who "makes poets as she pleases," and to the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, to love whom was a liberal education. But the effect of these novel ideas upon his poetry was not wholly good. If he recovered a note of sincerity which the sonneteers had generally missed, he lost the fine directness and temperance in which they excelled. By discarding the orthodox love doctrine he had put himself at the mercy of his impulses, and he suffered the plagues of an excommunicate. "They meet but with unwholesome springs," sings the orthodox Habington,[2] alluding to those who, like Donne, "Affirm no woman chast and fair."[3]

The charge is only too well founded. Brutal sensuality, coarse cynicism, fury, hate, despair—these are emotions no less characteristic of Donne's early poetry than mystical rapture and valiant faith. His control is often uncertain. A cynical fancy will change under his pen to a noble surmise, and a lofty speculation to a

[1] See *Metempsychosis* (1601).
[2] *Castara* (1634).
[3] *Cf.* Donne: "Go and catch a falling star."

cheap gibe—e.g., *Elegy III.* "*Air and Angels.*" He seems to have written at white heat, as a means of self-revelation, following the chance connections of ideas as they surged through his capacious brain. His imagery is intellectual rather than sensuous; and it is sometimes his care for logic that leads him from his purpose.

The sonnet form, if he had adopted it, would no doubt have steadied his head and hand; but he associated it too closely with the falsetto of Elizabethan chivalry to divine, with Shakespeare, that it might be adapted to more honest uses. The few sonnets that he wrote belong to his later years, when the change in his moral views, and the disuse into which the form had fallen, had robbed it for him of its vulgar associations. In his youth he preferred the looser forms (song or couplet), which left his imagination free to wander; and the result is that many a lesser man has a better idea of that unity in thought and feeling which a lyric should possess. This, however, would not have troubled him. There is nothing to show that he took the least interest in art for art's sake, and he was probably fatigued by those feasts of wit at the Mermaid. While Ben Jonson bullied him about the rhythm of his verse,[1] Donne probably "withdrew his thoughts," like Dr. Johnson on a similar occasion, and speculated on the rhythm of life. So long as he could follow his own thought and avoid hackneyed conceits and sing-song melody, he was content to leave his poetry harsh, and sometimes grotesque. If he had been interested in literary form he would infallibly have followed Ben Jonson in studying and, perhaps, imitating the classics, for the works of Catullus, Ovid, and Martial contain much to attract a mind sick of chivalry and Petrarch. But Donne was too much in earnest to imitate anybody. On the few occasions when he has another author's work in mind, he writes rather in allusion to his original than in imitation of it.[2] Always he preserves his freedom and his originality. His one literary aim seems to have been to make his poetry an exact reflection of his mind, the microcosm which was itself the reflection of the whole world. He followed "nature" as faithfully as Dryden in 1674 or Wordsworth in 1798, but "nature" as conceived of by the mystical scientist; and it is because the furniture of his mind was as miscellaneous and strangely assorted as the universe of Sir Thomas Browne, that the effect of his poetry is often so bizarre.

With a little more artistic consciousness (as distinct from self-consciousness) he might have been among the greatest reformers of English poesy, but he was such an opportunist in merely literary matters that he made it impossible for any one to follow him. He gave some impetus to that theory of the poetic function which may be found in Chapman's prefaces, in Reynolds's *Mythomystes*, and in the encomia which a later generation showered upon Cleveland; but he cannot be said to have founded a school of "Metaphysical" writing. Of the poets who tried to imitate him not one could reproduce his quality.

[1] See Drummond's *Conversations*.

[2] *Cf.* the *Satires*, *The Sun Rising*, *The Bait*.

His poems are serious, fervent, restless; and their sincerity is somehow emphasized by the sense of effort which they always convey. They are not poems so much as the adventures of an inquiring spirit;

> the index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

Original inspiration was essential to the poetical character as conceived by Reynolds and realized in Donne. Hence those writers (*e.g.*, Cowley and Carew) who tried to imitate Donne's witty exuberance only attained what Johnson calls a "laboured particularity," in which the spirit of the original is entirely lost. The only poet who consciously aimed at the ideal of "Metaphysical" writing, and who, just because he did not imitate Donne, has the best claim to be regarded as his successor, is Cleveland.

JOHN CLEVELAND (1613–58), the son of a Leicestershire clergyman, went up to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1627, and became a fellow of St. John's in 1634. Ejected from his fellowship for opposing the election of Burgess for the town of Cambridge, he joined the king (by whom he was well received) at Oxford, and was made governor of Newark. His reputation for wit, already great, was now augmented by the satires with which he assailed the Parliamentarians, and he was soon recognized, says Anthony à Wood, "by the bravados as the Hectoring Prince of poets." Whether he stooped to journalism is doubtful, especially in view of his satire on the profession in the *Character of a Diurnal Maker;* but his influence upon *Mercurius Elencticus* is indubitable, and his authorship of some numbers was suspected.

In 1646 he was deprived of his post, and for a time was dependent upon the charity of the Royalists. He was imprisoned at Yarmouth in 1655 on the ground that he was "a person of great abilities, and therefore able to do the greater disservice." A manly letter to Cromwell procured him his release, and he retired to Gray's Inn, "where," says Aubrey, "he and Sam Butler had a clubb every night. . . . He was a comely plump man, good curled hair, dark brown. Dyed of the scurvy and lies buried in St. Andrew's Church in Holborne, Anno Domini 1658."

The nature of the great reputation which he left behind him is sufficiently well indicated in the phrase by which his admirer Thomas Shipman describes him: "that incomparable Enthusiast." Among the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease he seemed the *Furor Poeticus Incarnate.* "Now," say his editors of 1677, "instead of that strenuous masculine style which breatheth in this author, we have only an enervous froth offered, as if they had taken the salivating pill before they set pen to paper." They even claimed for him prophetic vision. "He was *vates* in the whole Import of the word, both Poet and Prophet: for . . . he foresaw the Pieces of Silver paying upon the Banks of Tweed, and that they were the price of his Sovereign's bloud, and predicted the Tragical Events." He seems to have been the leader of "a rugged sect" of Cambridge poets (the "College sect" which is

contrasted with the "Court sect," led by Davenant), who, in accordance with the principles laid down by Chapman, cultivated an obscure and harsh style of verse called "strong lines."[1] These "strong lines," which were recommended by Reynolds, parodied by Randolph (*To Shirley*) and Corbet, and regarded by Oxford men as a Cambridge affectation,[2] were the result, says Hobbes, of "an ambitious obscurity of expressing more than is perfectly conceived or perfect conceptions in fewer words than it requires," and, as Osborn warns his son, "ask more pains in time and chewing, than can be recompensed by all the nourishment they bring."[3]

This is the text of Dryden's criticism of Cleveland: "He gives us many times a hard nut to break our teeth, without a kernel for our pains." But the obscurity of style which disgusted Hobbes and Dryden, Walton and Wither, was the secret of Cleveland's popularity. It was because his poems contained that "darkness" with which Chapman had "laboured to be shadowed," that he had a following of serious literary theorists. "His shamefaced wit," says the preposterous Samuel Austin,

> its countenance doth shroud
> Like as the sun when mantled in a cloud.
> 'Tis dark and veil'd till the illustrious sense,
> Wrapt in Ink Clouds by wise Intelligence,
> Is quite unbodied; then it shews its face
> Through the black mask of letters with much grace.
>
> *Naps upon Parnassus.*

The modern critic, however, will agree with Dryden, that Cleveland's poems are intolerably overloaded. Though they preserve the buoyant mannerism of inspiration, they are weighed down with conceits, "clenches, quodlibets, and quarter-quibbles." His extravagance is not entirely due to wilful eccentricity. It is partly explained by the fact that, when he began to write, all the most obvious conceits, and a great many of the more recondite, had become hackneyed. In his search for original expressions Donne had travelled far enough afield; and Cleveland was compelled to travel farther still. Where his ingenuity failed him he tried to gain his effect by quick changes. He never dwells long upon a single conceit, but leaps from one to another with desperate agility. Donne's conceits develop naturally like a growing plant, Cleveland's materialize suddenly at right angles to the line of progress like chemical crystals. This coarse fertility gave him his fame; but it also killed the "Metaphysical" style as a literary medium. His speed made him erratic, and the novelty of his style is often so surprising as to be comic. That this was sometimes, at least, unintentional is shown in the fact that some of his most grotesque illustrations occur in poems on serious subjects.[4] He was forced, by

[1] See *Elegy* on Randolph by his brother, and the commendatory verses prefixed to the 1677 edition of Cleveland.

[2] *Naps upon Parnassus* (1658).

[3] Hobbes, *Letter to Davenant*; Osborn, *Advice to a Son.*

[4] e.g., *On the Memory of Mr. Edward King*; *An Elegy upon the Arch-bishop of Canterbury.*

the mere necessity of finding new conceits, on to the border line between brilliance and bathos. In this connection his association with Samuel Butler is curious, for Butler consistently uses for comic effect the conceits which Cleveland used at least half seriously. Whether Cleveland was really serious in his character of the Inspired Poet, and all unwittingly gave his friend the material for his satire, or whether they both looked upon "strong lines" as a kind of game, must remain a question. But there can be no doubt that Butler's *Hudibras* did more to destroy Cleveland's reputation, and, indeed, to discredit all "Metaphysical" poetry, than any other piece of writing.

Cleveland's reputation can never be revived, because it depended upon the peculiar condition of literary taste at his time. His importance, whether we consider the matter or the manner of his work, is chiefly historical. But it is still possible to discover behind all his extravagance an astonishing amount of real wit, and behind all his affectation a simple and gallant character.

THE EARLIER CAVALIERS

THOMAS CAREW (1594–?1638).—Though Carew did not survive to be historically a Cavalier, he claims a place in this section by his temperament and his friendship with Suckling. The son of a Kentish knight, he went up to Merton College, Oxford, in 1608, and after taking his B.A. in 1611 was entered at the Middle Temple, where he apparently "did little at law." Subsequently he was made secretary to Sir Dudley Carleton, who was appointed ambassador to the Hague in 1616, and three years later was attached to the retinue of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, ambassador to France (1619–24). In 1628 he was appointed gentleman of the privy chamber, and ended his life as sewer to the king. Tradition represents him as a man of licentious habits and uncharitable disposition; but his talents won him the society of Jonson, Selden, Cotton, Davenant, and Donne.

Poetry.—Although the *Poems* (1640) are full of borrowings from Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*, Carew's literary debt to Donne is really very small. He uses the same thoughts in a different manner and for a different end; trying to mitigate their harshness and perplexity in such a way that they may not

> tear
> The tender labyrinth of a soft maid's ear.

The truculent indecency of some of Donne's poems was directed at what he considered the prudery of his age; the mellifluous licentiousness of Carew's seems to aim at the kind of praise which Rochester pays Sedley:

> Sidley has that prevailing gentle art
> As can, with a resistless charm, impart
> The loosest wishes to the chastest heart.

When he follows Donne in his more exalted fancies it is surprising how mean and trivial he manages to make them.[1] The sonorous slowness, the awkward syntax, and the general sense of effort which obviously add so much to the power of Donne's poem have vanished; and in the skilful phrases of Carew's tripping octosyllabics the same thoughts appear commonplace. In the light of such a contrast it becomes clear that the deliberate awkwardness of the "Metaphysical" style had an æsthetic justification. Further, it is clear that Carew was not really a "Metaphysical" poet, and that he never intended to be. In his *Elegy upon the Death of Dr. Dunne*, which is still the best short estimate of Donne's place in English poetry, while praising Donne for his "giant fancy" and "masculine expression," he admits that as regards language he must yield precedence to writers

> whose tuned chime
> More charms the outward sense.

He himself always tried to make his verse melodious; and although, as Suckling says in *The Sessions of the Poets*,

> the issue of 's brain
> Was seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain,

he industriously avoided any appearance of effort. In this, and in everything else that regards the manner of writing, he is the disciple of Ben Jonson, whom he encourages, in terms that are significant, not to repine "at the taper's thrifty waste that sleeks" his "terser poems."

Carew's fame rests upon a few songs: "*Ask me no more;*" "*When thou, poor excommunicate;*" "*Give me more love;*" "*He that loves a rosy cheek;*" but the first of these would alone suffice to make him immortal.

> Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
> When June is past, the fading rose;
> For in your beauty's orient deep
> These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609–42), son of the comptroller of the royal household, matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1623. After three years he left the university without a degree to travel on the Continent. He sailed with the Marquess of Hamilton to Germany, to fight for Gustavus Adolphus, in 1631; and in 1639 raised a troop of "100 very handsome young proper men" to fight for the king in Scotland. He sat as member for Bramber in the Long Parliament, but took part in the abortive army plot of 1641, and fled to France. There, "being come to the bottom of his fund that was left, reflecting on the miserable and despicable condition he should be reduced to . . . he took poyson, which killed him miserably with vomiting" (Aubrey). "He was the greatest gallant of his time,

[1] *Cf.* Donne's *Valediction Forbidding Mourning*; Carew's *To my Mistress in Absence.*

and the greatest gamester both for bowling and cards, so that no shop-keeper would trust him for 6d." He wrote three inferior plays and a prose *Account of Religion by Reason* (1637).

Poetry.—Throughout his poetry[1] there runs a vein of hard cynicism which he had learned from Donne.[2] He excels Carew in his power of vulgarizing what he borrows,[3] but, unlike Carew, he never attempts to follow Donne in his nobler flights. From the expressions of Donne in his rebellious moods, Suckling drew the swaggering philosophy of disillusion which marks all subsequent Cavalier poetry. It is amusing enough when he treats it with humour—*e.g.* "*Why so pale and wan,*" "*Out upon it,*" "*'Tis now since I sate down*"—but when he tries to be serious the barrenness of his creed is depressing—*e.g. Farewel to Love,* "*I prithee spare me.*" It disfigures in the end even the delightful *Ballad upon a Wedding.* He is less careful of his verse than Carew, and for that reason the contrast between his style and Donne's is less clearly marked. But so far from copying Donne's high serious manner he makes fun of it. He begins one of his songs with a line from Donne's grave poem, *Love's Deity,* simply to emphasize the frivolity of what follows; and in another, after a couplet in Donne's heavy manner, he breaks into a canter with something like a chuckle.[4]

Suckling, as he admits in *The Sessions of the Poets,* was a writer "who loved not the muses so well as his sport." Only in the song "*When, dearest, I but think of thee,*" does he attain anything like perfection.

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618–59), the son of a Kentish knight, was educated at Charterhouse and entered at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, in 1634. He was given his M.A. two years later, "at the request of a great lady belonging to the Queen." He served against the Scots in 1639, and in 1642 was "elected by the whole body of Kent at an assize, to deliver the Kentish petition." For this he was imprisoned, and on his release, after seven weeks, was confined to London; so that he could only support the king's cause by "furnishing men with horse and arms." In 1640 he formed a regiment "for the service of the French King, was colonel of it, and wounded at Dunkirk." On his return in 1648 he was again imprisoned, and spent his enforced leisure in preparing for the press a collection of his poems under the title *Lucasta,* published in 1649. After the execution of King Charles, Lovelace

> was set at liberty, and having by that time consumed all his estate, grew very melancholy (which brought him at length into a consumption), became very poor both in body and purse, was the object of charity, went in ragged cloaths (whereas when he was in his glory he wore cloth of gold

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1 *Fragmenta Aurea* (1646).

2 *Cf.* Donne, *Community, Love's Alchemy, The Broken Heart;* and Suckling, *Against Fruition,* "*There never yet was woman made,*" *The Guiltless Inconstant.*

3 *Cf.* Donne, *The Ecstasy,* and Suckling, "*If you refuse me.*"

4 See "*O for some honest lover's ghost,*" and "*Never believe me if I love.*"

and silver), and mostly lodged in obscure and dirty places, more befitting the worst of beggars and poorest of servants. He died in a very mean lodging in Gunpowder Alley, near Shoe Lane.
ANTHONY Á WOOD.

" He was an extraordinary handsome man," says Aubrey, " but proud."

Poetry.—In half a dozen of Lovelace's songs the braggadocio of the Cavalier is transmuted into the finer sentiment of the knight-errant. English chivalry lives for ever in his song to Lucasta :

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

But the rest of his poetry[1] reveals the cynicism, the prurience, and the bibulous affectation of the " roaring boy." Having little wit and no humour, he could not support the character with the spirit and address of Suckling. He is often very tedious. Although he was an ardent admirer of Ben Jonson,[2] he nevertheless fell in with the fashion of writing " strong lines "—e.g., *The Triumphs of Philamore and Amoret*, and in *The Snayl* and *The Toad and the Spider* emulated the grotesque extravagance of Cleveland's *The Bee Errant*. To do him justice he is always original, but he is often quite unintelligible. At his worst he is a dull, " Metaphysical " poet ; at his best he is the noblest of the Cavaliers.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674) would have been a Cavalier if he had not become a clergyman. The son of a wealthy goldsmith of London, he was entered as a fellow-commoner of St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1614, and subsequently removed to Trinity Hall, whence he proceeded B.A. in 1617 and M.A. in 1620. He then returned to London, where, for a time, he lived the life of a fashionable wit, well known both at court and at the Mermaid Tavern. In 1627, having taken holy orders, he served as chaplain to the expedition to the Isle of Rhé, and two years later was presented to the vicarage of Dean Prior, in Devonshire, where he remained until his ejection by the commissioners in 1648. His *Hesperides* was published in the same year. He was reinstated in 1662, and held the living until his death.

Poetry.—When Herrick took orders he had been prepared for some modification in his habits ; he had faced the dismal prospect of giving up sack and writing religious verse with resolution ;[3] but he cannot have expected to be thrown upon the society of a few half-educated Devonshire squires. The only link with his past that remained to him was poetry. In poetry he could forget " dull Devonshire," and breathe once more the air of that pure region where the Immortals are : Anacreon, Horace, and Ben Jonson. " I am a free-born Roman," he says,[4] and every page of the *Hesperides* is a vindication of his birthright. He liked to

[1] See *A Loose Saraband ; Love made in the First Age ; The Scrutiny*, etc., etc.
[2] See the *Satyr on Sanazar's being honoured*, etc.
[3] See the *Farewell to Sack* and the *Farewell to Poetry*.
[4] His *Returne to London*.

imagine himself a Roman priest, saying matins and evensong in honour of Jove, or paying vows to Mars and Neptune; and having once embarked upon the fancy, he invented a bevy of mistresses—Julia, Sylvia, Perilla, and the rest—who don the priestess's robe, as occasion requires, and bury him with due classical rites.

In playing this game he observed moderation. He never went to such lengths as a contemporary clergyman, who was haled before the justice by his landlady for sacrificing a bull to Jupiter in the back parlour. Herrick was content that his fancies should remain fancies as long as they saved him from the prevailing dullness of loathed Devonshire. At the same time he was too good an epicurean to live on his fancies entirely. He does not lean on "heaped-up flowers in regions clear and far," but sits "by a shining salt-cellar," drinking sack and contemplating the exquisite colour of grapes in a glass bowl. His life was a feast of the senses, not of "sensibility"; and the roses which he claims for his muse were plucked from Anacreon's crown, not from Laura Matilda's bouquet. There is a vigorous realism in many of his comparisons. Though the perfumes of his mistress's bodice are "sweet as the vestry of the oracles," they also remind him "of roasted warden or baked pear"; though Julia sometimes dons the chaplet of a priestess, she generally wears a blue petticoat "pounced with stars"; and though she is the despair of "rubies, corals, tinctures," she has, as Mr. Edmund Gosse observes, a double chin. This homely streak in the texture of Herrick's imagination gives his poetry a peculiar charm. It inspires *The Hock Cart*, a picture complete in every detail, down to the "rent breeches" of the rustics; it leaps to view in his *Grace for a Child*. Quaintness was natural to him; and though he tried to make it a pose, it remained an idiosyncrasy. When he compares himself to a robin[1] he is affected, but when he compares the hues of dawn to strawberries and cream he is purely artless. To his unclouded eye strawberries and cream were, as he explains in *The Lily in Crystal*, simply a marvellous colour phenomenon; and it probably never occurred to him that they could have, for the romantic mind, humble and carnal associations. An epicure in scents and sounds and colours, he is almost silent

Robert Herrick.
(S. Kensington Museum.)

[1] *To Robin Redbreast.*

about the pleasures of taste, and in his most sensual moments preserves an air of detachment.

His poetry reflects the frank hilarity of the Golden Age, unpreoccupied with desire and therefore unafraid of it. In this, and in every other respect, he is entirely unromantic. At his touch the fairies emerge from their glamour to become merely exquisite miniatures of man, and Nature, shorn of the mystery that she held for many of his contemporaries, exists to provide coronals for Julia and texts for his own meditations. The whimsical tenderness of his address to various flowers does not "lie too deep for tears." It is exactly at tear level; and it implies an attitude which, if less imaginative, is certainly more sociable than that of Wordsworth. Herrick's garden manners are perfect. That a man of his temperament and literary judgment should have felt constrained to write the *Noble Numbers* is a curious proof of the confused state of contemporary criticism. The attempt involved him in ludicrously unconvincing apologies[1] and resulted in a mass of very inferior verse. He succeeds best with themes which allowed of a semi-classical treatment,[2] but on the whole his religious verse compares ill with the work of Herbert, Crashaw, or Vaughan. His style, however, never deserts him entirely; and it is this which places him beyond time and change. For expressions as accurately cut as jewels, and for melody as clearly articulated as a peal of bells, Herrick is unrivalled.

THE RELIGIOUS POETS

The earlier attempts of Southwell, Sylvester, Markham, and Lok to redeem poetry by making it the handmaid of religion had been received by men of wit with indifference or contempt.[3] But the qualities of *The Temple* (1633) were such as to extort admiration.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593–1632) passed from Westminster to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was made a fellow in 1615. Three years later he became public orator, and in that capacity attracted the notice of James by some Latin verses in praise of the king's *Basilicon Doron*. For a time after this he followed the court, where his relationship with the Earl of Pembroke and "his love of court conversation" made him many distinguished friends. But the deaths of King James and of his patrons the Duke of Richmond and the Marquess of Hamilton, cut short his hopes of court preferment, which had never been very fervent. Long before, at the age of seventeen, he had declared that his "poor abilities" should be "all and ever consecrated to God's glory"; and now, after "many conflicts with himself," he decided to gratify his mother's dearest wish by becom-

[1] See his *Confession*, 1, his *Prayer for Absolution*, 2; *To God*, 113.
[2] *Dirge for Jephthah's Daughter*; *The Widow's Tears*.
[3] See Hall, *Satire VIII*.

ing a clergyman. He was made prebendary of Lincoln, married Jane Danvers in 1630, and in the same year accepted the rectory of Bemerton, near Salisbury, where he died.

Poetry.—Herbert's wit is sometimes described as "Metaphysical," and his poetry has been supposed to show the influence of his friend Donne. But there is this fundamental difference between the two writers that, while Donne, as befits a "Metaphysical" poet, cultivates obscurity, Herbert in his humility always writes as simply as he can. He says that when he first began to write religious verse he had sought out

George Herbert.
(*S. Kensington Museum.*)

> Quaint words and trim invention
> Curling with metaphors a plain intention,

but that his conscience whispered:

> How wide is all this long pretence!
> There is in love a sweetness ready penned;
> Copy out only that and save expense.—*Jordan.*

The relics of this phase, the conceits and quibbles with which he still "tricks" his sense, are only admitted, as it were, on sufferance. He allows them place for the reason that he allows "an handsome and seemly carpet" in his church, "not as out of necessity, or as putting holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness." If he had been a fanatic, like Wither, he would have discarded them entirely. But Herbert was not a fanatic either in religion or poetry. So far from following Donne in his revolt against Elizabethan literary fashions, Herbert placidly adopted them all. *The Temple* contains twelve sonnets, several diagrammatic conceits of the kind recommended by Puttenham (e.g., *Easter Wings*), and many Arcadian or euphuistic turns of expression. He is not trying, like Donne, to evolve a new style, but to demonstrate how the style already in existence might be applied to pious uses. Donne's conceits are the substance of his thought, Herbert's are nearly always illustrations of a thought which would be complete without them.[1] It is the simplicity of Herbert that is the secret of his power.

RICHARD CRASHAW (1613–49), although an admirer of Herbert, stands in strong contrast to his master. The son of a keen Protestant theologian, he was educated at Charterhouse, and admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1631. In 1636

[1] Compare *The Rose* with any early poem by Donne.

he moved to Peterhouse, where he remained till 1641, when he joined the king at Oxford. In 1646 he was discovered in Paris by his friend Cowley, and presented to the queen. In the interval he had become a convert to the Roman Church, and had prepared for the press his *Steps to the Temple*. The queen gave him letters to Italy, where he became secretary to a cardinal, and died in the enjoyment of a benefice at Loretto.

Poetry. — At Cambridge Crashaw fell in with the fashion and wrote "strong lines" (see the *Posthumous Poems*). But the affectation sat ill upon him, and already in his *Wishes to his Supposed Mistress*, *Music's Duel*, and the lines *Upon a Gnat burnt in a Candle*, he shows a delicacy of sentiment, fancy, and language unknown to Cleveland and his tribe. The turning-point in his career was his reading of the works of St. Teresa, probably between 1641 and 1646. This completed his religious and imaginative development, and resulted in those amazing poems, the *Hymn to St. Teresa*, *The Flaming Heart*, *To the Name of Jesus*, and the *Odes* written to a young gentlewoman. These poems are, like Thomas Cartwright's preaching, in the highest degree "florid and seraphical." He makes no appeal, like Herbert, to the erring and despondent, for he makes no concessions to human weakness. He cannot believe that the Countess of Denbigh's doubts about joining the Roman communion are serious; and his advice to the lady crossed in love shows a superhuman lack of sympathy. Like most mystics, he assumes a certain spiritual condition in those for whom he writes, and for that reason his "fit audience" is limited. But his inspiration is irresistible, and thrills the nerves even when it does not touch the heart. It is not a mannerism; it is a dispensation. While Herbert uses the well-worn language of decorous love-making, Crashaw lays bold hands on the wild metaphors of passion, dedicating them to the Creator as the spoils of ghostly war. He transforms all that he touches. The images drawn from wounds and blood which the ordinary hymn-writer nearly always makes disgusting, and the old Apocalyptic symbols which he uses so stupidly, become in Crashaw's hands a new language of the soul.[1] Yet with all his astonishing power he is guilty at times—*e.g.* in *The Weeper* and *The Flaming Heart*—of puerilities that would disgrace Wither. And this inconsistency explains the diversity of opinion among his critics. Francis Thompson, who was clearly under his influence, described him (rather loosely) as the "highest product" of the "Metaphysical school," for his range and eloquence; Pope, thinking rather of the formal qualities of his work, took him "to have writ like a gentleman, that is at leisure hours, and more to keep out of idleness than to establish a reputation, so that nothing regular or just can be expected of him." He defies adequate description.

HENRY VAUGHAN (1621–95).—Of Vaughan little is known. He was probably entered at Jesus College, Oxford, with his twin brother Thomas, in 1638, and may

[1] See especially *To the Name of Jesus* and *Sancta Maria Dolorum*.

have resided subsequently in London. He certainly served with the king's troops during the Civil War, but when, how long, and in what capacity, is uncertain.[1] "Afterwards," says Anthony à Wood, "applying himself to the study of physic, he became at length eminent in his own country for the practice thereof, and was esteemed by scholars an ingenious person, but proud and humorous." This view of his character seems to be supported by some of his more intimate poems—*e.g.* *Misery*, *The Garland*, *Dressing*, etc.

His early *Poems, with the Tenth Satire of Juvenal Englished*, were published in 1646, and his religious verse, *Silex Scintillans*, in 1650. The secular poems of his maturity were published in 1651 under the title *Olor Iscanus*, and a collection of miscellaneous verse, *Thalia Rediviva*, in 1678.

Poetry.—In his youth Vaughan made the mistake of imitating Donne. Not only did he echo his phrases, but he cultivated Donne's condensed and abrupt style of verse, with weak rhymes and awkward *enjambement*.[2] From Donne he transferred his allegiance to Cleveland, and wrote "strong lines" of the toughest description.[3] But his best work, *Silex Scintillans*, is inspired by Herbert's *Temple*, with which he can hardly have been acquainted earlier than 1646. His sympathy with Herbert's literary aims is proclaimed in the preface, his moral debt to him as a teacher is acknowledged in *The Match*, and his admiration for him as a writer is shown by a long list of borrowings or verbal echoes. Yet in Vaughan's case, as in Crashaw's, Herbert's work provided a stimulus rather than a schooling. Like his brother Thomas, Vaughan had dabbled in those theosophical speculations which went under the name of "magic." He was acquainted with the idea of an "astral body," or "sensitive nature," which, as his brother says, "is the same in us as in beasts, in vegetables and in minerals," and is "part of the soul of the world, commonly called the medial soul, because the influences of the divine nature are conveyed through it to the more material parts of the creature.[4] These "mystic lies," he says, he had ceased to believe,[5] but in poems like *Cock Crowing*, *The Tempest*, *Man*, and many others the impress of such ideas is easily discoverable. The idea of Nature as one great emanation of the Holy Spirit, and of himself as part of it, is always present to his mind, and gives his poetry a quality that reminds one of Wordsworth rather than of Herbert. Sometimes, in a mutinous vein, he laments that he was created man and endowed with a spiritual nature in addition to his astral part.

Hadst thou
Made me a star, a pearl or a rainbow,
The beams I then had shot
My light had lessened not;
But now
I find myself the less the more I grow.

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[1] See *Elegy on Mr. R. W.*; *Upon a Cloke*.
[2] See *To Amoret*; *The Importunate Fortune*.
[3] See *The King's Disguise*; *In Zodiacum Marcelli Palingenii*.
[4] *Anthroposophia Theomagica* (1650).
[5] *Importunate Fortune*.

For the same reason he looks wistfully back at his childhood as a state of innocence, in which, says Thomas Vaughan, "the sensitive nature did not prevail over the spiritual, as it doth now in us." [1]

It is only in his flashes of mystic insight that Vaughan is a better poet than Herbert, for he lacks the graceful rhetoric with which the latter can enhance a pious commonplace. His eloquence falters as his vision fades. But when that vision is at the full, as in his "They are all gone into the world of light," or in that magnificent opening of *The World*,

> I saw Eternity the other night
> Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
> All calm as it was bright,

he shows at once a sanity of religious thought which makes Crashaw seem hysterical, and a glow of mystical imagination which "far transcends the decent piety of Herbert." And his feeling is then matched with the perfection of language and rhythm.

THOMAS TRAHERNE (*d.* 1674) was known only as the author of ecclesiastical tracts until 1903, when Mr. Bertram Dobell published his poems and *Centuries of Meditations* from a manuscript in his possession. Another manuscript, containing thirty-nine additional poems, was discovered in the British Museum, and published in 1910 by Mr. H. I. Bell. Traherne, the son of a Herefordshire shoemaker, was entered at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1652; took his B.A. in 1656, his M.A. in 1661, and his B.D. in 1669. He became rector of Credenhill, near Hereford, and was subsequently made chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman and vicar of Teddington, where he died.

Poetry.—Most of Traherne's verses and prose meditations turn upon the theme of Vaughan's *The Retreat*—childhood and the wisdom of innocence. From this narrow circle of great ideas he has neither the power nor the wish to escape. He seems to be one who, having had one great imaginative moment, spends the rest of his life meditating upon it. Hence, though he can write the best "enthusiastic" prose in the language, he fails conspicuously as a lyrist. A true lyric is the expression of an emotion supposed to be present; Traherne's verses are too often the explanation of an emotion that is past. He succeeds best with couplets, in which his autobiographical manner and explanatory tone are more tolerable. But he has no conception of the artistic possibilities inherent in the form, and only succeeds with it when he can make it sound like blank verse.[2] Blank verse was his proper medium, and he never discovered it. His reputation must therefore rest upon his prose.

ANDREW MARVELL (1621–78), the son of a "Calvinisticall minister of Hull," entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1633, and took his B.A. in 1638. He then travelled

[1] See *The Retreat*, which was admired by Wordsworth.

[2] See *Dumbness*.

for four years, and in 1650 was appointed tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax. Many of his lyrics were probably written at his patron's residence at Nunappleton. In 1653 Marvell became Milton's colleague in the Latin secretaryship, a post which brought him into close relationship with Cromwell. In 1659 he was elected M.P. for Hull, was re-elected after the Restoration, and continued to represent that constituency until his death. His satires belong to his later years. Always a champion[1] of liberty of conscience, he at first preferred Charles to his bigoted brother, and contented himself with satirizing his ill advisers. But the entire lack of principle that the king showed in his dealings finally disgusted him, and he learned to hate the very name of Stuart.[2]

Poetry.—The common notion that the Puritans were distinguished by distrust of all the arts is not supported by the history of 17th-century poetry. The Anglicans, Herbert and Vaughan, distrusted poetry so far that they tried to make it the vehicle of denominational religion; it was the Puritan, Marvell, who first clearly realized that the writing of secular verse, like any other act, might be done to edification, and that the Muse might be respectable without going to church. This discovery, which is implied in his poem called *The Coronet*, saved him from the qualms of conscience that had assailed Donne, Herrick, and Vaughan.[3] Endowed by nature with an unusual sensibility to beauty in all its forms, he was able to indulge it with an untroubled mind. An unerring instinct led him clear of affectation on the one hand and carelessness on the other. He could write in the "Metaphysical" style of Donne without imitating his brutality, and he attained something of Herrick's "witty delicacy" without his affectation. He was extraordinarily versatile. Donne only succeeded when he was grave; Herrick when he was gay; but Marvell wrote well in any mood. A remarkable instance is to be found in the lines *To his Coy Mistress*, which begin in a mood of playful banter and end in tragic fury. Of the poets mentioned in this chapter only Marvell could have altered the level of thought so abruptly without destroying the unity of the poem. His nature poetry is interesting, not only for the Wordsworthian mood of introspection which it expresses, but also for his avowed preference for the wilder aspects of nature.[4] The sublime figure of his Mower, Damon, has more in common with Wordsworth's dalesmen than with the pert swains of Georgian pastoral. His satires are often trenchant, often humorous; an occasional grossness of language seems to have been exacted from him by his subject. He had not learned Dryden's art of making his victims "die sweetly," and his mastery of the couplet is imperfect. He is much better in his encomiastic verses on Cromwell, especially in the *Horatian Ode*. This poem alone would assure Marvell a high place among English poets.

[1] See *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* (1672).
[2] *A Dialogue between Two Horses.*
[3] See Vaughan, *The Garland.*
[4] Cf. *The Garden* and *The Mower, Against Gardens*, etc.

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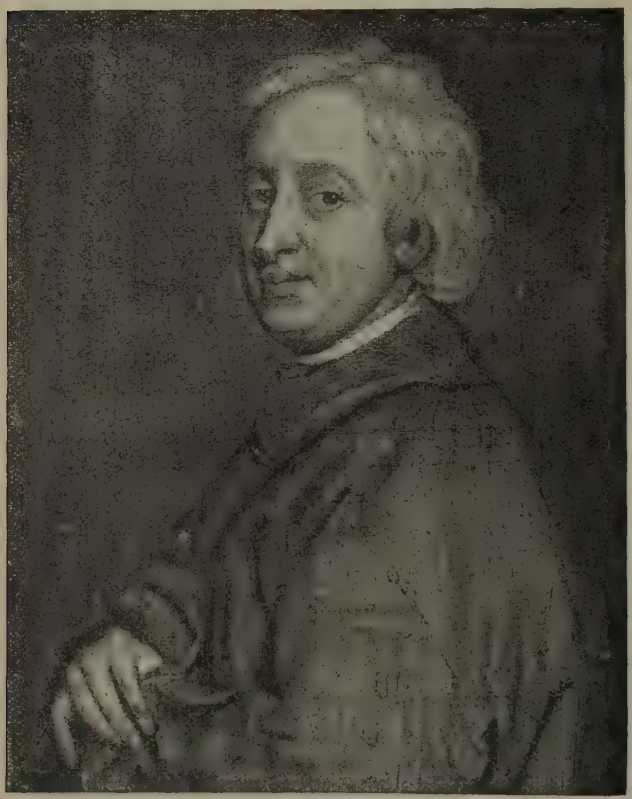
Chapter 5. THE LATER CAVALIER POETS

Dryden—Waller—Davenant—Butler—Cowley

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

Life.—Born at Aldwinkle All Saints, near Oundle, a gentleman's son, he was bred at Westminster under Busby and at Trinity College, Cambridge. Coming to London, he became secretary to his cousin, Sir Gilbert Pickering, M.P. He succeeded to a small estate, and in 1663 married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, a wife with some dowry. In the same year he commenced playwright. The publication of *Annus Mirabilis* in 1667 made a hit, and in 1670 he was appointed poet laureate and historiographer with a yearly salary of £200. The plays and critiques of the next twelve years won him recognition as a man of letters, and he was in much demand to write prologues and epilogues, but he suffered from narrow means and he had three sons to keep. Then, in 1681–2, the publication of a group of satires suddenly revealed him as a great poetical controversialist, gifted with an originality and mastery which made him the most formidable influence of his time. He came to be accounted a literary dictator, and the boy Pope was proud to get a glimpse of him in his chair at Will's Coffee-house. After the



John Dryden.

accession of James II. he joined the Church of Rome, and at the Revolution he lost his office. His pen was still active and enabled him to live, his most profitable work being the translation of Virgil. He met with courage the pains of age, and dying in London was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Chief Works (other than Plays)—*Original Poems: Heroick Stanzas* (1659); *Astræa Redux* (1660); *Annus Mirabilis* (1667); *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681); *The Medal* (1682); *Mac Flecknoe* (1682); *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part II. (part) (1682); *Religio Laici* (1682); *Threnodia Augustalis* (1685); *The Hind and the Panther* (1687); *Britannia Rediviva* (1688); *Eleonora* (1692); *Alexander's Feast* (1697); *Epistle to John Driden* (in *Fables*) (1700).

Translations from Theocritus, Lucretius, Horace, Homer, Ovid, published in *Sylvæ* (1685), *Examen Poeticum* (1693), and other Miscellanies. Juvenal (five satires) and Persius (1693); Virgil (1697). Translations from Chaucer in *Fables* (1700).

Prose.—Essay of Dramatic Poetry (1668); *Life of Plutarch* (1683); Prefaces to Plays and Poems, various dates.

Character.—"Dryden," wrote Gray, "was as disgraceful to the office [of poet laureate] from his character as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses." In giving this harsh judgment Gray must have had two things in his mind—the grossness of Dryden's comedies and the belief that he had joined the Roman Church to curry favour with James II. On the latter point the critic was mistaken. Dryden had little to attach him to the Church in which he was bred, and little liking for priests of any body. To such a mind a Church which claims supreme authority presents sufficient attraction, at any rate when the current seems to set that way. To the charge of grossness there can be no defence except Dryden's repentance, which was honestly felt and candidly expressed. He had had to make a living, and stooped to that means of making it. And his merits outweigh his faults. His consciousness of power was untinged by arrogance. He scorned folly and false pretences, but was ready to help struggling merit. He was a passable husband, an affectionate father, and a true friend. To such virtues must be added the industry of his intellect, his dignity under adversity, and his frank repentance for his early faults. He is not in the foremost line of genius, but his vigour and versatility make him one of our greatest men of letters.

Views and Works.—So much was he a man of letters that hardly any literary subject was alien from his pen, impelled as it was by a continual pressure of thought. Thus, through life his judgment steadily improved, while to the end there was no loss of power. Passing his boyhood under the dominion of the school of poetical conceits, he published, while still a boy at Westminster, lines in which the marks of the smallpox on the body of Lord Hastings are compared to rosebuds, gems, and

stars. He may be said to have commenced regular author with the *Heroick Stanzas* upon the death of Cromwell. Though neither this poem nor *Astræa Redux*, with which he greeted the return of Charles II., was quite free from conceits, both had a promise of vigour partly realized in *Annus Mirabilis* (1665). Here the heroic quatrain popularized by Davenant is employed to describe the engagement with the Dutch fleet and the Fire of London. After fifteen years given mainly to criticism and the drama, Dryden was happily diverted from the project of an epic to the writing of his first great satire. At the age of fifty he had at last found a subject exactly suited to his powers. He owed it to the workings of a mind whose activity was akin to his own—

> A fiery soul, which working out its way,
> Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay:
> And o'r informed the Tenement of Clay.
> *Absalom and Achitophel*, 15, p. 6 *sqq.*

Such was Shaftesbury, and *Absalom and Achitophel*, an assault upon Shaftesbury and his adherents, shows a new mastery of the heroic couplet. As Pope puts it, Dryden

> taught to join
> The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
> The long majestick March and Energy divine.

In a political satire such moral indignation as had been simulated by Juvenal is out of place. With unerring skill Dryden put in its place a lofty scorn far more biting to the statesmen whose characters he assailed. Further, while he shows no weakness of mercy to the individual, he lifts his theme above the plane of personalities by the skill with which he represents the person as a type of the evil embodied in him. Dryden, rightly enough, accounted the character of the Duke of Buckingham under the name of Zimri his masterpiece in this line, but his mastery of satire is hardly less displayed in the inverted foil of the praise bestowed upon Shaftesbury for his conduct as Lord Chancellor. In *The Medal* he resumed the attack on Shaftesbury in a sterner mood, and a stupid reply from the pen of Shadwell gave occasion for the writing of *Mac Flecknoe*. Here again, while no mercy is shown to Shadwell, the personalities are redeemed by the general judgment of literature which underlies the biting verse. The poem gave the hint for Pope's *Dunciad*, but, unlike his successor, Dryden did not allow his contempt to degenerate into spite. The second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, mainly the work of Tate, is notable for Dryden's addition of the character of Shadwell under the name of Og.

In an age of theological controversy so universal a man of letters as Dryden could hardly ignore the strife. A Tory in sentiment, he disliked the multiplicity of sects and desired a Church in which he could rest without a too active practice of its precepts, for he was no enthusiast, and throughout life held to his dictum that

> Priests of all Religions are the same.
> *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 99.

The publication by a young friend of his named Dickinson of a translation of Father Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* suggested the composition of *Religio Laici*. Professedly an imitation of Horace's *Epistles*, it shows a power of putting into easy and yet sonorous verse arguments which are in themselves of no great cogency. The work has always appealed to men like Scott, who are Tories in grain. Since it was a defence of the Church of England, it was unlucky that it was so soon followed by Dryden's conversion to the Church of Rome, but the change was natural enough in one whose religion sat lightly on him, and who held that

> *Reason's* glimmering Ray
> Was lent, not to *assure* our *doubtfull* way
> But *guide* us upward to a *better* Day.
> *Religio Laici*, 5 *sqq.*

Yet it was necessary that Dryden should justify his change, and this he endeavoured to do in *The Hind and the Panther*, a work, as he says, "neither impos'd on me nor so much as the Subject given me by any man." In this allegory the Christian churches are represented by different beasts, a device which was no novelty in literature, though derided at this time by Prior and other wits. The work is irregular and digressive, and handles a controversy in which the writer was no expert, but the satiric parts show the master's hand.

Dryden's lyrics were mostly written to be sung and, their coarseness of sentiment and phrase apart, are well fitted for their purpose. His odes, though not quite free from false ornament or a touch of operatic banality, have a sonorous splendour which secures them a lasting popularity. Happily they make no attempt to take their imagery from the phenomena of nature. It is idle to seek in Dryden what he could not give, and we may be thankful that his odes have none of the false bombast which appears, for instance, in these lines from *The Indian Emperor :*

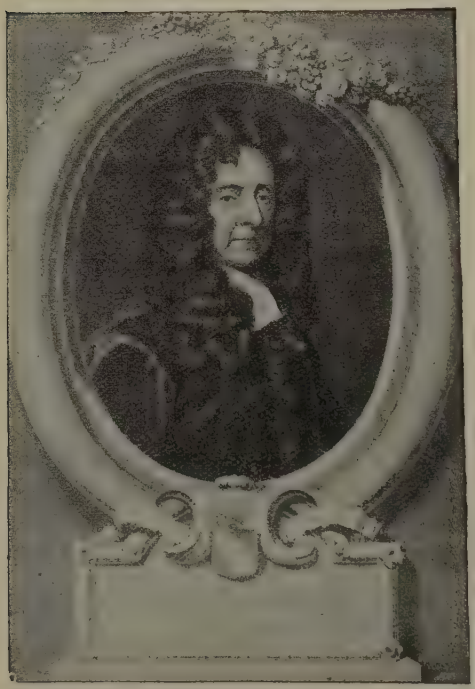
> All things are hush'd, as Nature's self lay dead :
> The Mountains seem to nod their drowsy head ;
> The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
> And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dew sweat.

Turning in his last years to paraphrase, Dryden found some subjects which suited his talents. His versions of Chaucer have been superseded by our power to enjoy the original, but of *The Flower and the Leaf* he made another and an excellent poem. Juvenal and Ovid have no serious quarrel with their translator, but of Virgil Dryden understood neither the spirit nor the phrase. "Coarse and reckless" are the epithets applied to the translation of the *Æneid* by the greatest of Virgilian scholars. In the best passages rhetoric supplants poetry, while the worst are grotesque, as for instance

> Where Simois rolls the bodies and the shields
> Of Heroes, whose dismember'd hands yet bear
> The dart aloft, and clench the pointed spear.
> *Æneid*, I. 100 *sqq.*

The characteristics of Dryden's style and thought may be best studied in his prose works. Before him there had been no writers of a convenient and regular English prose. Hooker and Milton and Clarendon had composed great works, but in a style unfit for everyday use. The new style was the creation of Dryden. He had almost attained to it in the preface to *Annus Mirabilis :*

> For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the Sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn ; and if I have made some mistakes, 'tis only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them.



Edmund Waller.
(S. Kensington Museum.)

He had quite attained to it when, in the preface to the *Fables*, he wrote :

> What Judgment I had increases rather than diminishes; and Thoughts, such as they are, come crowding in so fast upon me, that my only Difficulty is to chuse or to reject, to run them into verse or to give them the other harmony of Prose.

Such a style is the product rather of the critical than of the fiery spirit, and, if Dryden had had wings to carry him into the empyrean of poetry, he would never have created it. (See also p. 277.)

EDMUND WALLER (1606–87)

Life.—Born near Amersham, and bred at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, Waller early inherited a good estate, and entered Parliament. In 1630 he married an heiress. In the Commons he supported Hampden, but on the outbreak of war changed sides and joined a plot, for which action he was banished. He was pardoned in 1651, and lived quietly at Beaconsfield until the Restoration, when he found favour at court, and died Provost of Eton.

Chief Works.—*Poems*, first circulated in manuscript and then published in 1645; *A Panegyric to my Lord Protector* (1655); *To the King* (1660); *Divine Poems* (1685).

Character.—Burnet describes him as lacking in earnestness, " being a vain and empty, though witty, man." When arrested he was " confounded with fear and apprehension," and informed against all his accomplices. But he had eloquence and charm, and deserves remembrance as an early champion of toleration.

Characteristics.—Waller lives as the author of "*Go, lovely Rose*" and "*On a Girdle.*" Between 1629 and 1639 he wrote many love-verses to Lady Dorothy Sidney, but they lack sincerity, and he seems to have had no wish to marry her. His other poems are of little account, except the didactic verses of his old age. Dryden said that Waller "first made writing easily an art." By popularizing the distich and studying antithesis Waller prepared the way for the school of Dryden and Pope. This is seen in such a couplet as

> Ripe fruits and blossoms on the same tree live;
> At once they promise and at once they give.

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT (1606–68)

Life.—Davenant, the son of an innkeeper, was born and bred at Oxford; he became a page in London and a dependent of the court. He wrote successful dramas and sided with the king in the war. In 1646 he fled to France, but attempting a voyage to Virginia was captured and sent to the Tower. On his release he obtained leave to resume dramatic performances, and after the Restoration he formed a successful theatrical company. His chief work, other than plays, is *Gondibert* (1651).

Character.—He was a man of much energy and little brain, save for some faculty for business.

Works.—*Gondibert* might have been a romantic epic if there had been any design in it. Its chief interest lies in its form of the quatrain, which followed Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), and was followed by Dryden and Gray; but Davenant's main claim to remembrance is bound up with the history of the English stage.

SAMUEL BUTLER (1612–80)

Life.—The son of a Worcestershire farmer, Butler became a page to the Countess of Kent at Wrest Park, and spent many years as secretary to different country squires. About 1660 he married a woman of means, but her money was lost in speculation. In 1663 he suddenly became famous by the publication of the first part of *Hudibras*, the second appearing the following year. He got little money from his work, and the court did nothing for him. He spent eighteen years of obscure poverty in London, and lies buried in St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

Works.—*Mola Asinaria* (1659), a tract in support of the Stuarts. *Hudibras*, Part I., 1663; Part II., 1664; Part III., 1678. *Two Letters* (1672), a tract against the Nonconformists. A posthumous publication is *The Genuine Remains in Verse and Prose of Mr. Samuel Butler* (1759).

Character.—Butler is not a pleasing personality. He was bitter, scornful, and full of a hard common-sense. He had no gift for friendship, and seems to have owed to his temperament the neglect from which he suffered; but his satirical power was great, and he hit the mark full in the centre with every shot. He came to hate the Puritan squires with whom he lived. His views were mainly negative, but he was well read, with much human wisdom and an unusual power of concentrated thought.

Samuel Butler.
(*S. Kensington Museum.*)

Work.—Butler took the idea of his satire from *Don Quixote*, but his object was solely to satirize the Roundheads. His characters are types with little real life in them, and his work became less easy to read as a whole when the hatred for Roundheads was no longer stimulated by their actual existence. He lives by the breadth and humour of his outlook and by his skill in the distich; every one is familiar with such sayings as:

> Ay me! what perils do environ
> The man that meddles with cold iron!

Or again:

> He that complies against his will
> Is of his own opinion still.

The rugged metre and versatile rhymes are so exactly and inexhaustibly made to fit his subject that his use of them must be said to show genius.

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618–67)

Life.—Born in London and bred at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge, Cowley was a Royalist, and from 1646 to 1656, and from 1658 to the Restoration, spent his time in France. He died in retirement at Chertsey, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Chief Works.—*Poetical Blossoms* (1633); *The Mistress* (1647); *Pindarique Odes* (1656); *Davideis* (1656).

Character.—His character must be sought in his *Essays*, and he must have had himself in mind when he wrote of one " who has a moderate mind and fortune, and lives in the conversation of two or three agreeable friends, with little commerce in the world besides " (*Essays*, III.). This was his disposition in his later years, but he had lived much in the world and is our earliest example of one who is less a poet than a man of letters.

Davideis is an epic, uncompleted but hardly readable ; the so-called *Pindarique Odes* are fustian ; but in the *Essays* there are lines of Cowley which Pope rightly called " the language of his heart."

Characteristics. — Cowley stood between two ages. His conceits, his " Metaphysical " subtleties, his dialectic pedantries, belong to a decadence, while as a man of science and polish he heralded an age of reason and prose or prose-poetry. Thus his vogue was immense but brief, for the following school absorbed all that was good in him and avoided his faults. (See also p. 269.)

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Chapter 6. THE RESTORATION DRAMA

Dryden—Wycherley—Otway—Lee—Mrs. Aphra Behn—Congreve—Vanbrugh—Farquhar—Other Dramatists

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

Plays.—The following are Dryden's Plays, with dates of performance and publication:

(1) Comedies.—*The Wild Gallant* (1663, 1669); *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen* (1667, 1668); *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667, 1668); *An Evening's Love, or The Mock Astrologer* (1668, 1671); *Marriage à la Mode* (1672, 1673); *The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery* (1672, 1673); *The Kind Keeper, or Mr. Limbraham* (1678, 1679); *Amphitryon* (1690, 1690).

(2) Tragi-Comedies.—*The Rival Ladies* (1663, 1664); *The Spanish Fryer* (1681, 1681); *Love Triumphant* (1694, 1694).

(3) Tragedies.—*The Indian Emperor* (1665, 1667); *Tyrannick Love, or The Royal Martyr* (1669, 1670); *Almanzor and Almahide, or The Conquest of Granada* [two parts] (1670, 1672); *Amboyna* (1673, 1673); *Aurungzebe* (1675, 1676); *All for Love, or The World Well Lost* (1678, 1678); *Don Sebastian* (1690, 1690); *Cleomenes* (1692, 1692).

(4) Operas.—*The State of Innocence* (not acted; pub. 1674); *Albion and Albanius* (1685, 1685); *King Arthur* (1685, 1685; altered version, 1691, 1691).

Further, Dryden wrote some part of Sir Robert Howard's *Indian Queen* (1664, 1664); the first and third acts of Lee's *Œdipus* (1679, 1679); the opening scene, the fourth, and part of the fifth act of Lee's *Duke of Guise* (1682, 1683). He made a new version of *Troilus and Cressida* (1679, 1679).

The Spanish Fryer, which is described by Dryden as a tragi-comedy, gives a good example of his method. It contains two plots, one heroic but ending happily, the other comic. The dramatist thought the "contamination" successful, but in fact the two plots alternate with the flimsiest connection between them. The play may be taken as typical of Dryden in either form of the drama. Sancho, King of Saragossa, has been deposed and imprisoned by one of his noblemen, assisted by the Moors, and his children, as was supposed, all slain. The usurper on his deathbed betrothes his only child Leonora to Bertran, the son of his chief supporter in the rebellion. The Moorish king had desired Leonora's hand and now takes up arms. Bertran heads the Saragossans, but is thrice defeated, and thereon sends out a young warrior named Torrismond, who is immediately victorious. Torrismond is in love with Leonora, and

on his return allows Bertran to see his passion. Moreover, Leonora suddenly transfers her affection to him and secretly marries him. Bertran proposes to Leonora that

Interior of a London Playhouse, *circa* 1642.

Sancho shall be murdered, and she, hoping to get rid of him by throwing the odium of the deed on him, agrees. Presently Raymond, the supposed father of Torrismond,

returns from unspecified regions, hears of Sancho's death, and, eager to avenge his old master, discloses to Torrismond the fact that Sancho is that young hero's parent. Torrismond, however, prefers love to revenge, and leads Leonora's troops against Raymond. The situation is uncoiled by Bertran's announcement that Sancho has not been murdered and is still alive. There is a patent absurdity in the plot, and the characters are little more than stage figures.

In the comic plot Lorenzo, a gay young officer, meets Elvira, the young wife of the old and miserly Gomez. She accosts him, but on hearing that her husband is coming, runs off. Lorenzo describes his adventure to Gomez, who sees that the lady is his wife, and is put on his guard. Presently Lorenzo bribes Friar Domenick, the lady's father confessor and a Falstaff in a cowl, to play the part of Pandarus. Disguised as a friar he visits Elvira, but is detected by Gomez and turned out of the house. Turning from fraud to force he brings soldiers, who carry off Gomez. He is about to elope with Elvira when Gomez returns. The matter comes into official cognizance, and a farcical scene ends with the discovery that Elvira is Lorenzo's sister. The tale is grossly told, and culminates in Lorenzo's regret that the lady is beyond his reach. The characters are less unreal than their heroic associates, but even Dominick, the chief among them, is rather a poor copy from Shakespeare and Fletcher than a drawing from life.

In the only play "written to please himself" Dryden ventured to challenge a comparison with Shakespeare. The subject of *All for Love* is the tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra. In construction Dryden's play perhaps excels its predecessor, but falls far short in grandeur, while the great scene of Ventidius and Antony is a copy from Fletcher. Rhyme, which is a characteristic of the heroic tragedy, is here discarded, and the diction is rather Jacobean than Caroline.

Characteristics.—Except *All for Love*, Dryden's plays are no true part of his mind, and he knew it. His statement that he had written no others to please himself hits the lack of sincerity which is the worst of their many faults. Some of them had a catchpenny source—*Amboyna*, a wretched play, in the hatred felt for the Dutch; *The Spanish Fryer* in the fury against the Roman Church. But this was not the worst. Dryden wrote down to a debauched and frivolous audience, which looked in tragedy, not for human action or genuine passion, but for the rhetorical discussion of politics and love; while in comedy no imbroglio could satisfy it unless covered with the slime of indecency. And this fault, too, Dryden knew and confessed.

> O Gracious God! How far have we
> Prophan'd thy Heav'nly Gift of Poesy!
> . . . . . .
> Oh wretched We! why have we hurry'd down
> This lubrique and adult'rate age
> (Nay, added fat Pollutions of our own),
> T' increase the steaming Ordures of the Stage.
>
> *Ode to Mrs. Anne Killigrew.*

The tragedies have many speeches of powerful rhetoric and not a few lines which have become common quotations. Another strong point in them is the construction of the plot. The actions are often monstrous and revolting, the events not only improbable in themselves, but void of any artifice that should make them seem less improbable. Shakespeare's world of imagination, in which improbabilities are at home, is supplanted by a world of reason, with the result that the events and their setting are hopelessly at variance. These faults did not trouble an audience of courtiers, which sought only to be amused in its own way or at most to criticize on its own lines. And Dryden so managed the sequence of events that his audience kept its interest in his plots.

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY (1640–1715)

Life.—William Wycherley was the son of a loyal Shropshire gentleman of old family and good estate, who upon the outbreak of the Civil War sent his boy to be educated in France. He returned at the Restoration to Queen's College, Oxford. Leaving without a degree Wycherley entered at the Temple, but instead of devoting his attention to the law he rather studied gay life, the town, and pleasure of every kind. Already he had penned the first careless draft of a comedy, and those scenes, augmented and revised, were presented by the King's Company (1671) under the title *Love in a Wood*. The comedy (pub. 1672) was dedicated to the Duchess of Cleveland, who was notoriously intriguing with the handsome young author. *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1671–2), an admirable comedy, had a short run. *The Country Wife*, which is one of the masterpieces of English comedy, and only surpassed (if at all) by *The Plain Dealer*, appeared in 1673. *The Plain Dealer* must be dated not later than the spring of 1674. Wycherley was privately married to the Countess of Drogheda, a step that appears to have offended the court. Lady Drogheda proved a violently jealous woman, and great unhappiness ensued. Wycherley was seldom free from embarrassments. A severe illness wasted his frame and marred his memory, and in old age he was but a wreck of his former self. He is buried in St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

Works.—*Love in a Wood* (1672); *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1673); *The Country Wife* (1675); *The Plain Dealer* (1677). The *Miscellany Poems* are of no value.

Characteristics.—Wycherley's reputation has been damaged by Macaulay's essay on *The Comic Dramatists of the Restoration*. Yet we cannot argue licence of life from the freedom of his writings. Wycherley is by no means the worst of Restoration sinners. He had the sincere regard of Dryden and Pope, and other men of letters speak of him with warm affection. He must not be classed with Etherege and Sedley as a mere depicter of the gay life of the time without comment or criticism. Already in *The Country Wife* we perceive that we have entered a realm of sardonic

comparisons, that (strange as it may appear) we have a moral standard, that various actions and ideas are held up for reprobation or contempt. In *The Plain Dealer* these traits are accentuated with an energy almost fierce in its intensity. It may be said of Wycherley, as was remarked of the Roman satirist, that he portrays somewhat too warmly the vice he castigates. Eliza and Freeman stand forth two clear-headed, sensible, honest persons in contrast to the brutality of Manly, the villainy of Vernish, the harlotries of Olivia. If not so brilliant and refined as Etherege's polished dialogue, the speech of his characters is direct, terse, and far more lifelike than the repartee of beaux and lorettes beloved of "gentle George."

Style, etc.—Wycherley's dialogue is easy, natural, and direct. His satire is of characters rather than of abstractions; it is not matrimony, but the churlish, tyrannical husband (Pinchwife), the formal, empty, bustling booby (Sir Jasper Fidget), who are laughed at and cheated. *The Plain Dealer* remains one of the most trenchant satires in the English language.

In spite of the glitter of Congreve, Wycherley may in strength and boldness rank above him. His characters are admirably drawn, and such a creation as the Widow Blackacre stands amid the immortal figures of our literature. Nor was he unable to draw women of the tenderest sweetness and pathos, such as Fidelia. Of poetry Wycherley had none.

THOMAS OTWAY (1651–85)

Life.—Thomas Otway, son of a clergyman, was born at Trotton, near Midhurst, in Sussex. He was educated at Winchester, and at eighteen entered Christ Church, Oxford. He had been intended for holy orders, but, wasting his time at Oxford with wealthy and extravagant friends, he was obliged to leave the university for London (1670). Here he appeared at the Duke's Theatre as the King in Mrs. Behn's *Forc'd Marriage* (1670), but failed to become even the most mediocre of actors. His first play, *Alcibiades*, appeared in 1675. His second, *Don Carlos*, had a tremendous vogue, and thenceforth he pretty regularly supplied the theatre. His life, however, was embittered by an unrequited passion for the famous tragedienne Mrs. Barry. Otway obtained a commission from the Earl of Plymouth (1678), and went to Flanders, only to return in dire poverty. In 1682 *Venice Preserv'd* was produced. Having withdrawn to an obscure tavern, the Bull, Tower Hill, to escape his creditors, he died (April 14, 1685).

Works.—*Don Carlos* (1676); *Friendship in Fashion* (1678); *The Orphan* (1680); *The Soldier's Fortune* (1681); *Venice Preserv'd* (1682); *The Atheist* (1684). His other plays and the poems are of little consequence.

Characteristics.—Otway appears to have been weak, affectionate, impulsive, like Castalio utterly lacking in moral courage, and on the whole closely resembling his

own Jaffier. His letters to Mrs. Barry show his depth of feeling, and the ardour of his friendships was noticeable throughout his career. Generous and reckless to a degree, when crossed in love he abandoned himself to inebriety and despair. The son of a loyalist, Otway was ever faithful to the court. His *Poet's Complaint of his Muse* contains much caustic satire on the Whigs, albeit, to quote his own phrase, he never got more than "the pension of a prince's praise." His political leanings are very marked in the prologue and epilogue to *Venice Preserv'd*, and the mordant yet not untrue picture of Shaftesbury as Antonio.

Although Otway's first tragedy, *Alcibiades*, is mediocre, *Don Carlos* contains many striking passages, and takes high rank among heroic (rhyming) dramas. *Titus and Berenice* is a dull translation from Racine; *Caius Marius* an impossible cento from *Romeo and Juliet*. *Venice Preserv'd* is his admitted masterpiece. Otway's three comedies possess abundance of humour though paucity of wit, and in spite of their coarseness are still amusing. His plays are full of tenderness. In expression he is simple, terse, almost without ornament or metaphor, and his style, to avoid insipidity, demands great interest of situation and character, which he usually provides. "There have been more tears shed probably for the sorrows of Belvidera and Monimia than for those of Juliet and Desdemona," says Scott.

NATHANIEL LEE (*c.* 1653–92)

Life.—Nathaniel Lee, the son of a Hatfield clergyman, was educated at Westminster, whence he proceeded to Trinity, Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. (1668). His early life strangely resembled that of Otway. He essayed an actor's career only to fail utterly on the boards, and soon he turned to dramatic writing rather than acting. His heroic tragedy, *Nero, Emperor of Rome* (1675), was successful, but in later years has found few to praise and fewer to read it. In 1676 he produced *Sophonisba, or Hannibal's Overthrow*, founded on Orrery's *Parthenissa*. In 1677 *The Rival Queens, or Alexander the Great*, won a triumph, and took its place at once among the stock plays of the theatre. Lee twice joined with Dryden in writing tragedy. Their *Œdipus* was first performed in 1679; and three years later *The Duke of Guise* raised a furore by its political allusions, and was for a time forbidden. *Theodosius* (1680) long kept the stage, and Lee's last play, *The Massacre of Paris* (1690), has won no mean praise. The poet went mad in 1684, and for five years was confined in Bedlam. All his life he was addicted to the bottle, and returning home one winter's night in 1692 from a favourite tavern, he is said to have fallen to the ground and been stifled by the snow.

Works.—*The Rival Queens* (1677); *Mithridates* (1678); *Theodosius, or The Force of Love* (1680); *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681); *The Princess of Cleves* (1689); *The Massacre of Paris* (1690). With Dryden, *Œdipus* (1679); *The Duke of Guise* (1683).

Characteristics.—Lee was of a wild, impetuous nature; an underlying strain of madness, fostered by intemperance, seems to have tainted his whole life. Although he failed dismally on the stage, his grace and elocution were such that whilst he read a new tragedy one of the leading actors threw down his script with the cry, "Unless I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it!"

Lee is, with the exception of Dryden, the most typical heroic dramatist. His plays were written for acting, and he often gained his end by show and rhetoric. In politics he was a staunch Tory, and *The Duke of Guise*, more his than his great collaborator's, is one of the most notable political pieces of the time. The earlier plays of Lee, *Nero*, *Sophonisba*, and *Gloriana* are for the most part in rhymed verse, and draw their plots from the romances of Scudéry and Calprenède. *Mithridates*, *Theodosius*, and *Lucius Junius Brutus* are tragedies of real merit, and in spite of palpable historical absurdities, *Cæsar Borgia* has an energy which commands attention.

Lee has many speeches of blazing rant, whose extravagance of metaphor passes the bounds of sense and reason. Nevertheless that his plays were immensely effective on the stage is amply proven by theatrical history. He has many scenes and lines of simple and pregnant beauty, nor is he lacking in pathos, but his felicity of phrase is too often marred by bombast.

MRS. APHRA BEHN (1640–89)

Life.—Ayfara (or Aphra) Amis (or Amies) was born at Wye, Kent. Whilst she was yet quite young her father, John Amis, who seems to have been a relative of Francis, Lord Willoughby of Parham, administrator of several British colonies in the West Indies, having been promised an important post in these dependencies, left England with his family for Surinam. He did not reach his destination alive, but his widow and children resided there for several years, returning to London not long after the Restoration. Aphra married a Dutch merchant named Behn, who soon died, leaving her in straitened circumstances. She was employed by the Government as a political spy in Holland (1666–7). Her salary, however, became hopelessly in arrears, and when she arrived home in great difficulties she was flung into prison by her creditors. After her release she wholly devoted herself to literature. Her first play, *The Forc'd Marriage*, was acted with success (1670), and thenceforth her pen was never idle. She took no small position in the literary world of her day. Long overworked and ill, she died in 1689, and is buried in the east cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

Works.—(1) DRAMATIC. *The Rover* (I.), 1677, and a Second Part in 1681; *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678); *The Feign'd Courtezans* (1679); *The City Heiress* (1682); *The Lucky Chance* (1686)—all comedies. (2) NOVELS. *The Fair Jilt* (1688); *Oroonoko* (1688); *Agnes de Castro* (1688); *The History of the Nun, or The Fair Vow-Breaker* (1689). Her *Poems* appeared in 1684, and she edited a *Miscellany* in 1685. She

also wrote many translations from the French, and the once famous *Love Letters from a Nobleman to his Sister.*

Characteristics.—Mrs. Behn was the first Englishwoman to earn her livelihood by authorship, and in so doing she had continually to struggle against difficulties. A clique who entertained violent prejudices against a woman dramatist repeatedly endeavoured to drive her comedies from the boards, but perseverance won the day. " She was of a generous and open temper, something passionate, very serviceable to her friends in all that was in her power." She was a Tory and an ardent partisan of the court.

Her comedies have acquired a reputation for gross indelicacy, but are no worse in that respect than the drama of her contemporaries. Her novels, which are without offence, have always been more popular than her plays, and retained their vogue till late in the 18th century. Her masterpiece is *Oroonoko, the Royal Slave,* a story not without pathos and beauty. Macaulay does not hesitate to assert that the best of Defoe is " in no respect . . . beyond the reach of Afra Behn." Much of her work is marred by the haste with which she wrote. The wit and incisive dialogue of her scenes are often notable, and she shows much skill in conducting plot and intrigue.

WILLIAM CONGREVE (1670–1729)

Life.—William Congreve was born at Bardsey, near Leeds, the son of an officer in the army, who during the poet's infancy removed with his family to Ireland. Congreve was placed at the " great school of Kilkenny " and proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin (1685), where he became a fine scholar. He had already begun to write fluent verses, and his novel *Incognita* is said to have been composed during his last college year. It was published early in 1692, after he had crossed to England. In 1691 he found his way to London and joined the Middle Temple. Congreve became a member of Dryden's circle, and when *The Old Bachelor* was produced (1693) it met with a popular triumph. A second comedy, *The Double Dealer,* followed, but by no means met with equal success, although much applauded by the wits and writers. In 1695 the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields opened with *Love for Love.* His one tragedy, *The Mourning Bride,* appeared in 1697. The licence of the playhouse had until now passed almost uncensured ; and the world was unprepared for the thunderbolt launched at the stage by Jeremy Collier in March 1698. Whatever we may think of Collier's method, there can be no doubt that his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* curbed the ribaldry of the theatre. Congreve felt the blow deeply. His answer, *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations* (1698) contains much excellent reasoning against Collier's petulance. Yet the effect of the nonjuror's attack was apparent. When *The Double Dealer* was acted (1699) there were " several expres-

sions omitted." The previous year a leading actor and actress had been fined for using profane language; a playwright (D'Urfey) was prosecuted. In March 1700 Congreve's last play, *The Way of the World*, one of the wittiest comedies the stage has ever seen, was acted with but moderate success. Although still intimately connected with the theatre, he never gave the town another piece, and for many years seems to have been a complete invalid. During this decade he fell under the influence of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, to whom he left his ample fortune.

William Congreve.
(*S. Kensington Museum.*)

Works.—*The Old Bachelor* (1693); *The Double Dealer* (1694); *Love for Love* (1695); *The Mourning Bride* (1697); *The Way of the World* (1700). His early novel *Incognita* (1692) and the *Poems* are of comparatively slight importance.

Characteristics. — Congreve's appearance we know from Kneller's famous picture. Urbane is the word which best describes his temper; he had, according to the gossiping Mrs. Manley, "wit without the pride and affectation that generally accompanies, and always corrupts it." "Unreproachful" Gay termed him, and no doubt he was one of the most amiable of men. Lady Mary Montagu said that she had never met a man with a tithe of Congreve's wit.

The Old Bachelor belongs to an older genre. And yet, despite the fact that many of the characters are ancient stage properties, and more than one of the situations must have been well known to the audience, the whole is treated with a freshness that lends new life and distinction. The technique, for a first play, is marvellously good. *The Double Dealer* stands on a higher plane. The comedy is more witty, brilliant, and natural, but the irony bites deep. Indeed, it was perhaps on account of this implacable satire that it received so little popular applause. The villainies of Maskwell and Lady Touchwood have seemed to some critics too abominable for comedy. With more justice, the repeated soliloquies of Maskwell, who enlarges on his treachery to himself, have been found a little heavy and unskilful *Love for Love* stands next to *The Way of the World* in the list of Congreve's successes.

His one tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, deserves a high place in our drama. "It takes its place close after what is best in Otway and Racine." There are many passages of deep feeling; the action never drags; the speeches are never mere declamation. *The Way of the World* glitters with a frozen brilliance. In few plays is there art more consummate, wit more polished; in none is there less of human interest. The action is simply static; and until the appearance of Lady Wishfort in Act III., who for a brief moment infuses vigour and strength, we listen to conversations which, albeit delicately intellectual, in no wise lend themselves to any development of plot.

Style, etc.—It was the fault of Congreve's age perhaps that he could not break from the restrictions of artificial comedy into those broader scenes of life and that wider outlook which raise Vanbrugh (inferior as he is in wit and technique) almost to a level with the author of *Love for Love*. Congreve has not the strength and audacity of Wycherley, but in his own mode and world he remains unsurpassed. He is claimed, and not without reason, to be the wittiest of all playwrights. His diction is limpid, pure, and exact, with a grace all its own. At times, perhaps, the reader is left with a feeling that it is a little too exquisite, a little too rare; one looks in vain for a homely touch, an unpolished phrase. Hazlitt has well said that Congreve's comedies "are a singular treat to those who have cultivated a taste for the niceties of English style: there is a peculiar flavour in the very words, which is to be found in hardly any other writer."

SIR JOHN VANBRUGH (1666–1726)

Life.—Vanbrugh was the son of a certain Giles Vanbrugh, whose father, a merchant of Ghent, sought refuge in London during the rule of Alva. In 1691 Sir John was imprisoned in the Bastille as a suspect and a spy. During his incarceration he is said to have planned a comedy. In any case he produced his first play, *The Relapse*, in 1697, and soon followed it with *The Provok'd Wife*, an acknowledged masterpiece. Sir John was a soldier and a herald, and became Clarenceux King-of-Arms. In later years he devoted himself to architecture, and Castle Howard and Blenheim remain as specimens of his skill. The theatre which he built in the Haymarket has been called "the single failure of a fortunate life." Knighted in 1714, he died in 1726.

Works.—*The Relapse* (1697); *The Provok'd Wife* (1697); *Æsop* (1697); *The Confederacy* (1705); *The Mistake* (1706); *A Journey to London* (unfinished, 1728).

Characteristics.—Little is known of his personal character. That buoyancy of spirit which enlivens his plays is said to have been marked in his life, and he grew old with a youthful grace. Pope ranked him amongst the three "most honest-hearted real good men" of the Kitcat Club, and Swift termed him "a man of wit and honour."

Style, etc.—When we turn to the comedies of Vanbrugh we find a breadth of humour, a raciness of treatment, which is saved only by his skill from trenching upon the realms of farce. *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*, which owed its inspiration to a stilted play by Cibber, *Love's Last Shift*, is one of the raciest of English comedies. One has only to compare Cibber's puppets with Lord Foppington to see the creative power of Vanbrugh. Miss Hoyden and her churlish old father are almost as good. Tom Fashion is an engaging young rascal, careless, but not heartless like the Wildbloods and Wittmore of two decades before. And the Nurse is excellent, "even after Juliet's nurse in Shakespeare." *The Provok'd Wife* (1697) is technically a better play, and many critics regard Sir John Brute as Vanbrugh's masterpiece. Razor and Mademoiselle have been deservedly praised by Hazlitt, whilst Lady Brute and Belinda are drawn with remarkable skill. *The Confederacy*, translated from d'Ancourt's *Les Bourgeoises à la Mode*, ranks only below *The Provok'd Wife*.

The work of Vanbrugh is characterized by a vigour, an audacity, often even a dashing disregard for probability, which carries him triumphantly through situations that in another writer might well provoke censure. Never was dramatic writer so careless of technique as in *The Relapse;* yet with all its faults how masterly a comedy it is! Even in his translations of French plays, his hurried adaptations, Vanbrugh was happy, and generally infuses into the foreign scenes something markedly his own.

GEORGE FARQUHAR (1678–1707)

Life.—George Farquhar, the son of a clergyman, was born at Londonderry, Ireland. In the register of Trinity College, Dublin, he is entered as sizar (July 17, 1694). He is said to have been designed for orders, which career was barred him, according to tradition, by a profane jest. In any case, upon leaving the university he was for a while a corrector of the press. He became acquainted with the actor Robert Wilks, and by his means appeared upon the Dublin stage. Farquhar met with but slight success, however, and unluckily chancing to wound a fellow-actor by forgetting to change his sword for the property foil, he vowed never to tread the boards again. Wilks urged Farquhar to turn to play-writing, and the beginning of 1697 found him in London. His first comedy was *Love and a Bottle* (1698). *The Constant Couple* (1699) had a resounding success. In 1703 he married a lady whom he thought to be an heiress, but who proved to have no fortune. *The Recruiting Officer* was put on at Drury Lane (1706) and won great favour. Farquhar, however, was in terrible difficulties, and in spite of much hack-work for booksellers he sank into poverty. His last play, *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707), was written on a sick-bed, and he died the April following.

Works.—*Love and a Bottle* (1698); *The Constant Couple* (1699); *Sir Harry Wildair*

(1701); *The Inconstant* (1702); *The Twin Rivals* (1702); *The Recruiting Officer* (1706); *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707).

Characteristics.—It has been suggested that Farquhar's extraordinary diffidence (see his self-portrait in the *Letters*) may have to no small extent obscured his great natural talents. On the boards he never overcame stage-fright. His writings show recklessness and easy morals, tempered with a careless good-nature. His voice was very thin, and numerous contemporary allusions, as well as his early death, suggest a weak constitution.

The whole outlook and morality of Farquhar are fundamentally different from those of the Restoration theatre. In spite of protests and excuses the censure of Collier had begun to chasten the stage. Plume (in which character the author is traditionally said to have drawn himself), Archer, Aimwell, and even Wildair, are far removed from the rakes of Wycherley, Mrs. Behn, and Crowne. A deeper humanity underlies Farquhar's beaux; they have a conscience that occasionally wakes, a decorum that opportunely asserts itself. *Love and a Bottle* is only redeemed from mediocrity by a certain bustle and movement, and *The Constant Couple* is by no means free from artificiality. But Wildair is a character which, if not new to the stage, is at any rate treated from a new standpoint. He is a beau with brains, of a different calibre to the Horners and Woodalls, the Foppingtons and Nices, who had so long possessed the theatre. *The Recruiting Officer* affords an excellent picture of a broader life. Farquhar here paints scenes in which he had himself participated, often slovenly and unpolished, but at any rate fresh, vigorous, and original. *The Beaux' Stratagem* is probably his masterpiece. From the rise to the fall of the curtain all is bustle, business, life. Farquhar is closer to Fielding than to Dryden; in fact his two best plays might almost seem *Tom Jones* in dramatic form.

Farquhar has been usually classed with Congreve, Vanbrugh, and even Wycherley. In point of fact he is nearer Cibber than Congreve. He is not the last of the Restoration dramatists, but the link between two schools. It has been well said that he helps to bridge the chasm between the stage and the English novel.

OTHER DRAMATISTS

SIR GEORGE ETHEREGE (1634–90), wit, courtier, profligate, has left three comedies, *The Comical Revenge* (1664), *She Would if She Could* (1668), and *The Man of the Mode* (1676), which are full of gaiety and brilliance.

THOMAS SHADWELL (1640–92), a violent Whig, has, no doubt owing to his unfortunate quarrel with Dryden, been consistently underrated. He had comic gifts of a high order, unhappily balanced by a certain heaviness and literary clumsiness. As a picture of contemporary life his plays have not been neglected by subsequent writers, especially Scott and Macaulay.

JOHN CROWNE (1640–1705) wrote some eighteen plays, many of which are curiously clever. *Sir Courtly Nice*, his best, is full of humour and point. *City Politiques*, a satire upon the Whigs, met with a great success.

The plays of **ELKANAH SETTLE** (1648–1723) and **TOM D'URFEY** (*d.* 1723) have never been collected. It must be allowed that Settle had "a blundering kind of melody" about him and could write an effective melodrama. D'Urfey's comedies, though he was a great plagiarist, are full of amusing things. The dramatic work of **Sir CHARLES SEDLEY** (1639–1701) is hardly equal to his reputation as a wit.

THOMAS SOUTHERNE (1660–1746) is an excellent though neglected dramatist. His comedies, especially *Sir Anthony Love* (1691), are full of humour. Of his tragedies, *The Fatal Marriage* (1694) and *Oroonoko* (1696) long kept the stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

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Studies.—GOSSE, E.: *Eighteenth Century Studies* (3rd ed., Murray, 1897); *Congreve* (Great Writers, W. Scott, 1888).—THACKERAY, W. M.: *English Humourists* (1853, mod. eds.).

Chapter 7. THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN PROSE

Transitional Prose: Cowley's *Essays*—Hobbes's *Leviathan* and other Philosophical Works—Diarists, Memoir-writers, etc.: Pepys, Evelyn, Burnet, etc.—Dryden's Prose Works—John Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress, Mr. Badman, The Holy War*—Later Essayists: Temple, Halifax, etc.—Philosophers and Scientists: Locke, Newton, the Royal Society

TRANSITIONAL PROSE

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618–67).—The artificiality that made Cowley's poems insipid was not entirely absent from his prose. Yet, on the whole, the latter has a simplicity and directness, and expresses the wit, urbanity, and knowledge of a true lover of letters and observer of men and affairs, with an unaffected and engaging sincerity. The total amount of his prose writing is small. His *Proposition for the Advancement of Learning* (1661) sets forth views on the endowment of research. *A Vision concerning Cromwell the Wicked* (1661) is a half-hearted rhetorical attack, with some humorous touches, on the deceased Protector, written when it was popular to abuse his memory.

Essays.—It is in the eleven *Discourses by way of Essays, in Verse and Prose,* that Cowley displays style, and an accomplished skill in the choice of words. These belong to the last few years of his life. The titles are, "Of Liberty," "Of Solitude," "Of Greatness," "Of Obscurity," and so on. The last-named three, with "The Dangers of an Honest Man in Much Company," "The Shortness of Life and the Uncertainty of Riches," and "Of My Self," are worthy efforts in the manner of Montaigne. The last of them all, a miniature autobiography, is as favourable an example as any, both of his unaffected frankness, and of the easy vivacity, the almost colloquial unconstraint, and the perfect lucidity of his latest prose.

> As far as my Memory can return back into my past Life, before I knew, or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some Plants are said to turn away from others, by an Antipathy imperceptible to themselves, and inscrutable to mans understanding. Even when I was a very young Boy at School, instead of running about on Holy-daies and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a Book, or with some one Companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then too, so much an Enemy to all constraint, that my Masters could never prevail on me, by any perswasions or encouragements, to learn without Book the common rules of Grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercise out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which I confess, I wonder at my self) may appear by the latter end of the Ode, which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other Verses. The Beginning of it is Boyish, but of this part which I here set down (if a very little were corrected) I should hardly now be much ashamed.—*Essays*, XI., "Of My Self."

THOMAS HOBBES (1588–1679)

Life and Character.—Born at Malmesbury, and educated there and at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, Thomas Hobbes was for twenty years tutor, companion, and secretary to William Cavendish, afterwards second Earl of Devonshire. His connection with the Cavendish family was a useful stay throughout his long life. It gave a sense of security in troubled times to one who was constitutionally timid ; it brought him into contact with leading writers, philosophers, and statesmen, both at home and on the Continent ; and furnished a refuge for his old age, at the family seat, Hardwick Hall, where he died. On three occasions Hobbes travelled on the Continent in charge of a pupil, making the acquaintance of Descartes, Galileo, Gassendi, and Mersenne. At one time he had been on very intimate terms with Bacon, and acted as his amanuensis, though he never was, as is sometimes asserted, his disciple.

When forty years old he came across Euclid's *Elements* for the first time, and was deeply impressed by its logical demonstrations. He adopted the geometrical form of argument whenever possible. " They that study natural philosophy," he says, " study in vain, except they begin at geometry." In 1646 he was appointed mathematical tutor to Charles II., then Prince of Wales, in exile at Paris. But his knowledge of mathematics was defective, and at a later period he became involved in an unfortunate controversy on the quadrature of the circle with Ward and Wallis, professors of mathematics at Oxford, who were immeasurably better equipped in the subject.

Hobbes's political principles were diametrically opposed to those of the Long Parliament, and from 1640 to 1652 he took refuge in France, afraid lest his opinions, mostly expressed in works as yet only in manuscript, should attract hostile attention. The plan of his philosophical work had already been formed, and it was during this period that most of his books appeared. When his unorthodox views, especially on religion, brought him into disfavour with the clergy and the exiled court, he returned to England, submitted to the Council of State, and finally retired to Hardwick, where he wrote a history of the Civil Wars entitled *Behemoth*, an autobiography in Latin verse, and a translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Works.—Hobbes regarded philosophy as falling into two divisions—natural philosophy, or the study of matter or body, and civil philosophy, including ethics and politics. His plan was to treat the three subjects of matter or body, man, and the citizen, in three works, *De Corpore*, *De Homine*, and *De Cive*. The third part, *De Cive*, was published first, in 1642, at Paris, through the violence of the controversies raging, just before the Civil War, " concerning the rights of dominion and the obedience due from subjects," which, as he said, " ripened and plucked from me this third part." *Humane Nature, or the Fundamental Elements of Policy* (1650), practically anticipated *De Homine* (1658). *De Corpore Politico, or the Elements of Law, Moral and Politick*, appeared the same year. His most famous work was

Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil (1651). The first of the three great treatises he originally planned, *De Corpore*, was published in 1655, and an English translation next year. Besides these chief works, he wrote and published a great many tractates, poems, and miscellaneous works that need not detain us.

The Philosopher.—Hobbes was at one with Bacon in maintaining the practical value of knowledge, and in concentrating attention on nature and man to the exclusion of the supernatural. But he differed in his view of the proper method of prosecuting inquiry. To Bacon induction was the chief instrument of investigation. Hobbes regarded the synthetic or deductive method as superior to the analytical or inductive, and always aimed at the mathematical demonstration of philosophic truths.

Materialism.—He was fundamentally a materialist, finding the basis of all knowledge in sensation. Thoughts are

> every one a *representation* or *appearance*, of some quality, or other accident of a body without us, which is commonly called an object. . . . The original of them all, is that which we call SENSE, for there is no conception in a man's mind, which hath not at first, totally or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.
>
> *Leviathan*, Part I. 1.

Here comes in his doctrine of motion. The only reality, including the cognitive mind, is matter in motion. Causes are entirely mechanical. Sensations are the reaction of the brain or heart to the motion of the external body upon the organs of sense, continued inwards by the "nerves, and other strings and membranes of the body."

> All which qualities, called *sensible*, are in the object, that causeth them, but so many several motions of the matter, by which it presseth our organs diversely. Neither in us that are pressed, are they anything else, but divers motions; for motion produceth nothing but motion.
>
> The causes of universal things (of those, at least, that have any cause) are manifest of themselves, or (as they say commonly) known to nature; so that they need no method at all; for they have all but one universal cause, which is motion.—*Ibid.*

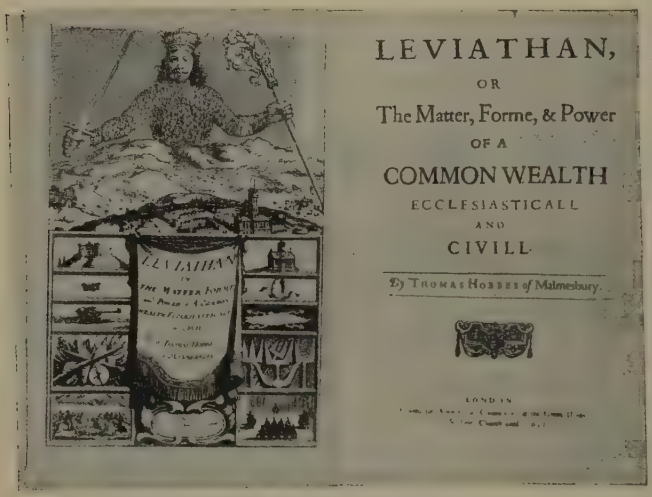
From this material and mechanical conception of nature and man is deduced his system of natural and civil philosophy, the latter of which, treated in his greatest English book *Leviathan*, is the province in which his thought has had the greatest effect.

"Leviathan"; Ethical and Political Philosophy.—According to Hobbes, man in a state of nature is a being actuated entirely by appetite or desire. His one object is to attain happiness and satisfaction for himself. And since all men are engaged in the pursuit of their own objects of desire, and altruism has no place in the original nature of man, it follows that the natural state is a state of "contention, enmity, and war."

To this war of every man, against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice. Force, and fraud, are in war the two cardinal virtues. Justice, and injustice, are none of the faculties neither of the body nor mind. If they were, they might be in a man that were alone in the world, as well as his senses, and passions. They are qualities, that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition, that there be no propriety, no dominion, no *mine* and *thine* distinct; but only that to be every man's, that he can get; and for so long, as he can keep it. . . .

The passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death; desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them. And reason suggesteth convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles, are they, which otherwise are called the Laws of Nature.—*Leviathan*, Part I. 13.

Man's reason finds him a way out from this intolerable state of things, by agreeing with his fellows to submit to a stronger power, residing in a certain person or body of persons, who shall impose laws, exact obedience, and restrain men from injuring each other by the unruly competition of the passions. A settled order is created when the individual renounces his rights and powers, and puts them in the hands of this authority, who in return confers peace, security, and equality of legal rights upon every man. Thus a commonwealth is established on the implied basis of a mutual covenant, a notion analogous to Rousseau's *contrat social*, though Hobbes's view of the natural man as a selfish being is alien from Rousseau's ideal.



Title-page of Hobbes's "Leviathan," 1651.

Defence of Absolute Monarchy. — This sovereign power is absolute, indivisible, and inalienable, inasmuch as the multitude has voluntarily and entirely renounced the individual rights and powers of its members. And though Hobbes uses the phrase "this man" or "this assembly of men," it almost inevitably follows that the most logical, consistent, and permanent form of commonwealth is one in which the absolute authority is vested in one person. Thus, from the democratic idea of mutual renunciation for the common good, Hobbes deduces the theory of despotic government or absolute monarchy.

> The essence of the Commonwealth . . . is one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defence.

Hobbes and his Times.—There can be little doubt that Hobbes's view, that absolutism was imperatively necessary for the maintenance of peace and the legitimate freedom and security of the subject, was forced upon him by the anarchy of his time. We have already seen that it was this which drew from him his political treatises before the publication of the works on natural and ethical philosophy which should have furnished their logical antecedents. His political theory was an extreme form of the doctrines against which the Parliamentary party was in arms. In the realm of thought he was their most formidable opponent.

Hobbes and the Church.—With the Church Hobbes was in disfavour, not only for his Agnosticism, but on account of his doctrine of the complete subjection of the Church to the State. This was a necessary consequence of his theory of absolute government, which could not permit the existence of a spiritual power co-ordinate with the temporal power. His antagonism was mainly directed against the Papacy, "the ghost of the deceased Roman empire." But he saw no solution of the problem but to make the Church completely subordinate and a mere instrument of the State.

In 1667 a Bill condemning blasphemous literature, and expressly mentioning the *Leviathan*, was passed by the Commons, but did not become law. Hobbes was seriously alarmed, and a number of his works dealing with controversial topics were not published till after his death.

Style.—The passages that have been quoted illustrate his clear thinking, and the lucidity, force, and originality with which he expounded his thought. He was a master of the sententious phrase, equal in pregnancy and vigour, if unequal in imaginative quality, to the great sayings of Bacon. It is not a graceful style. But it is well knit, certainly emphatic enough without the capitals and italics with which he accentuated his points, and stimulating to read in its sinewy strength, boldness, and constant suggestion of subacid humour.

PEPYS AND OTHER DIARISTS, MEMOIR-WRITERS, ETC.

SAMUEL PEPYS (1633–1703).—Two of the most remarkable diaries ever penned, by a strange coincidence, were in progress simultaneously at this time, written by men in close relations with each other, neither of whom was aware that his friend was keeping a record of the same events from a different point of view. Pepys was the son of a London tailor; he was educated at St. Paul's School and at Cambridge, and by the influence of his father's cousin, Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards first Earl of Sandwich, was made Clerk of the Acts, and by his own exertions and

sagacious pertinacity filled the post of Secretary to the Admiralty with great benefit to his country in a difficult time. His account of this work in his *Memoires of the Royal Navy*, 1679–88, published in 1690, is of historical importance. But it was his *Diary* that gave him a unique place in literature.

The "Diary."—Pepys began his *Diary* on January 1, 1660; and with pathetic regret relinquished it, through failing eyesight, on May 31, 1669. It was written in a form of shorthand, and for long reposed in the Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, before the key to it was discovered. His daily record of the personal, domestic, and public incidents of these years fills eight volumes of the least abbreviated edition. Whether we consider it as an historical or as a human document, its value is beyond price. Pepys the man, by this inimitably candid self-history, is known to us more intimately, perhaps, than any other Englishman; and—so true is it that to know everything is to forgive everything—no one can think of this self-indulgent, pleasure-loving, and vain being without affection. He had, of course, many sterling qualities that made up for his vices and weaknesses; but it is his *Diary*, and not his public services or his acts of good-nature, that put us in love with Pepys. As a piece of self-portraiture, Rousseau's *Confessions* alone are entitled to a place beside the *Diary*. But Rousseau was far from attaining the absolute frankness and freedom from any sort of affectation which Pepys maintained, apparently without taking thought or effort.

Samuel Pepys.

Method and Style.—Pepys's method might almost be defined as the absence of method. At the end of the day, or of several days, probably from notes roughly jotted down, he wrote out the occurrences that happened to be uppermost in his mind. Their relative importance is to be measured by their interest to Pepys, and the reader is quickly absorbed by the man's personality, and soon comes to look at everything from his point of view. All the petty concerns of his daily existence, his own or his wife's health, work at the office, the steady growth of his savings, the affairs of his friends, relations, and patrons, events in the political world and at court, the Plague, the Fire, innumerable lesser events, the Dutch war, the state of the king's ships, all these things are set down side by side with Pepys's anxieties,

jealousies, amours, reflections, repentances—in short, everything that was going on without or within which claimed his attention. It has often been remarked that the style is the same at the beginning as at the end of the *Diary*. He had gained immensely in worldly experience and was a much more important personage at the end of those nine and a half years; but the unstudied, easy-going style, so

The Pepysian Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

perfectly natural and so well adapted to his garrulous disposition, preserves the same familiar note all through. Compare these two pieces from the beginning and the close:

> *Jan.* 2, 1660.—In the morning before I went forth old East brought me a dozen of bottles of sack, and I gave him a shilling for his pains. Then I went to Mr. Shepley, who was drawing of sack in the wine cellar to send to other places as a gift from my Lord, and told me that my Lord had given him order to give me the dozen of bottles. Thence I went to the Temple to speak with Mr. Calthropp about the £60 due to my Lord, but missed of him, he being abroad. Then I went to Mr. Crew's and borrowed £10 of Mr. Andrews for my own use, and so went to my office, where there was nothing to do. Then I walked a great while in Westminster Hall, where I heard that Lambert was coming up to London; that my Lord Fairfax was in the head of the Irish brigade, but it was not certain what he would declare for. The House was to-day upon finishing the act for the Council of State, which they did, and were to sit again thereupon in the afternoon. Great talk that many places have declared for a free Parliament; and it is believed that they will be forced to fill up the House with the old members. From the Hall I called at home, and so went to Mr. Crew's (my wife she was to go to her father's), thinking to have dined, but I came too late, so Mr. Moore and I and another gentleman went out and drank a cup of ale together in the new market, and there I eat some bread and cheese for my dinner

After that Mr. Moore and I went as far as Fleete-streete together and parted, he going into the City, I to find Mr. Calthropp, but failed again of finding him, so returned to Mr. Crew's again, and from thence went along with Mrs. Jemimah, home, and there she taught me how to play at cribbage. Then I went home, and finding my wife gone to see Mrs. Hunt, I went to Will's, and there sat with Mr. Ashwell talking and singing till nine o'clock, and so home, there, having not eaten but bread and cheese, my wife cut me a slice of brawn which I received from my Lady, which proves as good as ever I had any. So to bed, and my wife had a very bad night of it through wind and cold.

May 5, 1669.—Up, and thought to have gone with Lord Brouncker to Mr. Hooke this morning betimes; but my Lord is taken ill of the gout, and says his new lodgings have infected him, he never having any symptoms of it till now. So walked to Gresham College, to tell Hooke that my Lord would not come; and so left word, he being abroad. To St. James's, and thence, with the Duke of York, to White Hall, where the Board waited on him all the morning: and so at noon with Sir Thomas Allen, and Sir Edward Scott, and Lord Carlingford, to the Spanish Embassador's, where I dined the first time. The Olio not so good as Shere's. There was at the table himself and a Spanish Countess, a good, comely, and witty lady—three Fathers and us. Discourse good and pleasant. And here was an Oxford scholar in a Doctor of Law's gowne, sent from the College where the Embassador lay, when the Court was there, to salute him before his return to Spain. This man, though a gentle sort of scholar, yet sat like a fool for want of French or Spanish, but knew only Latin, which he spoke like an Englishman to one of the Fathers. And by and by he and I to talk, and the company very merry at my defending Cambridge against Oxford: and I made much use of my French and Spanish here, to my great content. Thence home to my wife, and she read to me the Epistle of Cassandra, which is very good indeed; and the better to her, because recommended by Sheres. So to supper, and to bed.

EVELYN'S "DIARY."—John Evelyn (1620–1706) was an older man, and very different in position and character from his friend Pepys. He was a person of wealth and family, a scholar of wide interests, and a voluminous writer on very miscellaneous subjects. Both diarists were fellows of the Royal Society, and keenly interested in its proceedings: Evelyn was secretary for one year. His works include: *Fumifugium, or the Inconvenience of the Air and Smoke of London Dissipated* (1661), a work that all but induced Charles II. to get a Bill passed for remedying the evils pointed out; *Sculptura, or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving on Copper* (1662); *Sylva, or a Discourse on Forest Trees and the Propagation of Timber in his Majesty's Dominions* (1664); *Kalendarium Hortense* (1664); *A Philosophical Discourse of Earth* (1676); *Numismata, a Discourse of Medals* (1697); *Acetaria, a Discourse of Sallets* (1699); with a good many others. These titles are enough to show his multifarious attainments and the range of his inquiring mind. His *Memoirs comprising his Diary and a Selection of his Letters* was not published till 1818, in an edition by W. Bray. His touching *Life of Mrs. Godolphin* was also published during the last century.

The *Diary* covers the greater part of Evelyn's life, and is a grave and dignified autobiography such as would be expected from a learned and accomplished gentleman like its author. It has none of the gossipy charm of Pepys; but its substantial merits, and its sound, interesting prose, have made it the most readable book Evelyn left for posterity.

OTHER BIOGRAPHERS.—Among writers of memoirs must not be forgotten the

author of the rather scandalous and very entertaining *Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Gramont* (1713), written by an Englishman, Anthony Hamilton, and translated, defectively, into English by Abel Boyer (1714). It gave a famous picture of the characters, manners, and morals of the court of Charles II. The *Memoirs* of Sir John Reresby, who also wrote *Travels*, and those of Lady Fanshawe, have both been deemed worthy of publication in recent years.

BISHOP BURNET.—Of a graver order is Bishop Gilbert Burnet's *History of my own Times*, published posthumously (1723–34). It is a work of biography as much as of history, its delineations of character being done by a master hand, and the petty incidents and gossip chronicled with the skill of a novelist of manners. His more ponderous *History of the Reformation* (1679–1714) was a work that impressed his contemporaries.

DRYDEN'S PROSE WORKS

The first poet of the later 17th century was also the first of contemporary prose-writers; and he is this, not only on the strength of a superior style, but because of the lasting importance of his views on literary æsthetics.

His Prefaces, Essays, etc.—Dryden's work in prose consists in the main of the prefaces that he wrote to nearly all his plays and to some other works, together with two masterly pamphlets, a *Life of Lucian*, and various translations. These prefaces, especially the *Essay of Heroick Plays*, were not prefaces in the narrow sense, but, like the independent essay *Of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), replying to Sir Robert Howard's preface to *Foure New Plays*, were general statements of Dryden's literary theories. Howard had questioned the propriety of using the rhymed couplet in dramatic verse. Dryden defends the usage, both here and in the *Essay of Heroick Plays*, prefixed to *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), on the ground that heroic verse, or the ten-syllabled line in rhyming couplets, is naturally suited to the elevated and artificial diction of the heroic play, which he traces back to Ariosto as the original progenitor of heroic romance. Howard wrote a rejoinder, and Dryden closed the debate with *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668).

"Of Dramatick Poesie."—The original essay is in the form of a dialogue, Howard, Dorset, and Sedley speaking under classical names. Dryden further contends that observance of the unities of place, time, and action, as laid down by Corneille in the *examens* prefixed to his plays, was not inconsistent with the traditional English freedom of handling. He showed independence also in his criticism of other dramatists, Ben Jonson and even Shakespeare coming in for severe censure of their gratuitous irregularities. The last of these admirable prefaces was that concerning the *Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*, where Aristotle's theory of tragedy is applied to

the practice of Shakespeare and Fletcher, who are acclaimed as the greatest English playwrights, to the disparagement of their Gallic rivals.

Prose Style.—Dryden described his style in *The Defence of the Epilogue* (1672) as derived from the refined conversation of the court of Charles II. His meaning must not be taken too literally, for his prose is real prose, and not merely a superior kind of talk; nor is it merely the stiff and cumbrous older prose loosened and quickened by the infusion of a colloquial element. Dryden clearly realized that the office of prose was precise statement and logical exposition, demonstration, and reasoning; that it must have regularity and balance, though it should avoid stiffness and monotony by approximating to the easy flow of intellectual conversation. He accordingly secured clearness and precision, not by means of a complicated structure held together by a system of relatives and conjunctions, but by the intellectual rhythm of point and antithesis, which, however, does not call attention to itself, as in the euphuistic style. There is a happy negligence about Dryden's prose, that by no means detracts from the epigrammatic force and brilliance which are its general characteristics. He is at his most incisive in such sarcastic pieces as the introduction to *Absalom and Achitophel*, his *Epistle to the Whigs* prefixed to *The Medal*, and *The Vindication of the Duke of Guise*. The following piece is representative of his ordinary style.

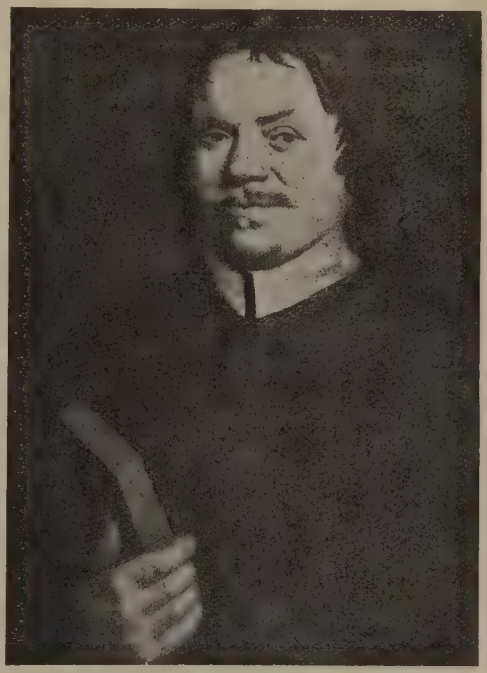
> We naturally aim at happiness, and cannot bear to have it confined to the shortness of our present being; especially when we consider, that virtue is generally unhappy in this world, and vice fortunate. So that 'tis hope of futurity alone, that makes this life tolerable, in expectation of a better. Who would not commit all the excesses, to which he is prompted by his natural inclinations, if he may do them with security while he is alive, and be uncapable of punishment after he is dead? If he be cunning and secret enough to avoid the laws, there is no hand of morality to restrain him: for fame and reputation are weak ties; many men have not the least sense of them; powerful men are only awed by them, as they conduce to their interest, and that not always, when a passion is predominant; and no man will be contained within the bounds of duty, when he may safely transgress them.
>
> Preface to *Sylvæ, or the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies.*

JOHN BUNYAN (1628–88)

Life.—A tinker, and the son of a tinker, of Elstow, near Bedford, John Bunyan served as a youth in the Civil War, under Sir Samuel Luke, the original of Butler's Sir Hudibras. He returned to his native village in 1647, married, and after reading *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*, two books belonging to his wife, underwent that deep emotional experience of sin, despair, and repentance which he describes so powerfully in *Grace Abounding*. Drawn to a fresh and more earnest study of the Bible, he renounced the vice and ungodliness in which he states that he had been a ringleader, and presently joined a Baptist congregation at Bedford, the pastor of which had been through a similar ordeal of repentance and conversion. Bunyan soon became a preacher himself, in

Bedford and the neighbouring villages; and at the Restoration was arrested under the Conventicle Act. As he stubbornly refused to give up preaching, he was kept in confinement, with one short interval, for twelve years, when the Declaration of Indulgence, intended by Charles II. for the relief of the Catholics, set him at liberty.

His captivity was not very rigorous, since it left him free to read and write, and during this term of imprisonment he produced nine books, including *Grace Abounding* (1666). During a later and shorter term of durance in Bedford jail he wrote the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1675). From this time he was allowed to preach without hindrance till his death.



John Bunyan.
(From the picture by Sadler.)

The Man: the Preacher and Teacher.— The man is revealed to us in *Grace Abounding*, his spiritual autobiography. Bunyan's nature was profoundly emotional. He enlisted in a fit of anger when his father married again. When he realized his sinfulness and its consequences, he was overwhelmed with remorse and terror. He thought he might at any moment be the object of the vengeance of God. He feared, as he stood in the church tower listening to the ringers, that the bells might fall on him, and he die unrepentant, condemned to everlasting punishment. The agonizing struggle his soul went through at this time is described, figuratively, in Christian's passage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. His simple theology, destining the saved to eternal happiness and the unrepentant to everlasting doom, presented to his realistic imagination a vivid image of heavenly bliss and infernal tortures. He saw mankind living with this tremendous alternative hanging over their heads, and was driven by pity and terror to awaken them to a sense of their danger, like a man giving the alarm to a slumbering city that a murderous foe is at the gate. Here we have the secret of Bunyan's intense appeal as preacher; and we also have the whole secret of his genius. Intense passion, moral earnestness, and an imagination that saw the felicities and the horrors of the next world in all the actuality of the present, combined with an innate eloquence, were the gifts that drew multitudes to his church at Bedford, and made *The Pilgrim's Progress* the most moving religious book in the English language.

Works.—Of the many works in which Bunyan called on his readers to repent and accept the fruits of the Gospel, four stand far above the rest. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, or a Brief and Faithful Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to His Poor Servant John Bunyan* (1666), has already been mentioned. The others are, *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to come* (1678–84), *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), and *The Holy War, or the Losing and Taking of the Town of Mansoul* (1682). The second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, telling the story of Christian's wife and children, was a sequel—somewhat inferior, as most sequels are. But it contains the ever-memorable characters of Greatheart, Valiant, and Standfast; the Shepherd Boy's song, and three songs of Pilgrimage, all four among the finest religious lyrics we have; and it concludes with the scene in the Land of Beulah and the Crossing of the River—twelve pages in which beautiful and time-honoured symbolism is used with perfect mastery to achieve the final effect of harmony and consolation.

"The Pilgrim's Progress."—Bunyan's masterpiece is almost as truly autobiographical as his *Grace Abounding*. To analyse this allegory of man's pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly Jerusalem would be a work of supererogation, since it is the most popular religious book ever written, and after the Bible probably the best-known work in the language. By 1685 it was in a tenth edition, and since that date the number of editions and translations, into almost every European and a great many other languages, is beyond computation.

The spell which the story casts over old and young is not due to the author's skilful handling of pure allegory, but to the intense actuality of his imagination. He may well have been acquainted with *The Faerie Queene*, and even have received the suggestive idea from Spenser's poem. But the two allegories are essentially different. Spenser's figures are poetic embodiments of abstract virtues and vices; Bunyan's are real people, drawn from everyday life, and their virtues or vices are natural traits of their characters as individuals. Such are Obstinate and Pliable, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mr. By-ends, Mr. Talkative, and the gentlemen of the jury in Vanity Fair—people that Bunyan had doubtless met among the rogues and cheats and respected citizens of the times of Charles II. As a realistic portrayal of manners *The Pilgrim's Progress* anticipates the novels of Defoe.

The story is enthralling. The intensely human character of Christian, who is the Bunyan depicted in *Grace Abounding*, grips our sympathies, and holds our fear and hope in poignant suspense, through the perils of the Narrow Way, the ordeals of Vanity Fair, and the tribulations in Doubting Castle, till we see him and Hopeful, attended by throngs of angels, mount the hill to the Celestial City. The tale runs simply, without complication or digression. Every scene is a bit of tense drama that leaves the impression of a real and unforgettable experience. The wonder of the achievement is strangely enhanced when we realize that Bunyan's object was

not to amuse, or to create a work of literary art, but simply to teach the religious truths which he regarded as the only important matter in the world.

"Mr. Badman."—His object was the same in the other two works that take the form of a story. *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* is a didactic tale, forming a counterpart to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in that it relates the biography of a sinner whose destination is hell. It is in dialogue, the story being told by Mr. Wiseman, who discusses the moral aspects of Mr. Badman's deeds with Mr. Attentive. There is, however, a much nearer approach to the form of a novel, and the book is a more complete picture of coarse and vulgar provincial life than the rare glimpses vouchsafed in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Mr. Badman is a typical selfish and unprincipled person, who yields to every appetite, outdoes his neighbours in all the knaveries of business without coming within the reach of the law, acquires wealth, and lives a comfortable, sottish, impenitent life, and, in spite of a passing fit of remorse and terror, dies peacefully and unawakened. Though Bunyan intersperses his narrative with lengthy discourses and incredible anecdotes of supernatural judgments on sinners and blasphemers, his artistic sense saves him from the common temptation of the didactic novelist to drag in a retributive catastrophe. He satisfies the sense of poetic justice without departing from the probabilities of real life. Outwardly, Mr. Badman is happy and successful. But he is brutalized by lust and selfishness, meanness and fraud. He is a lost soul before he reaches his death-bed. Well-being such as his, the only goal of so many in that time as in this, is seen for what it really is; and the reader's sense of justice and of repulsion is more surely satisfied than if Mr. Badman had been overwhelmed by material calamity.

John Bunyan's Meeting-house in Southwark.

"The Holy War."—Bunyan employed a much more elaborate allegorical scheme in *The Holy War* than in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the result was far less satisfactory. The city of Mansoul has five gates—Eargate, Eyegate, Mouthgate, Nose-

gate, and Feelgate—which cannot be forced without the consent of those within. The action is long and complicated. Among the hosts outside and the citizens within is a vast array of allegoric personages, representing vices and temptations and evil customs, or simply faculties of the soul. There is no room for the picturing of real life which saved the other two stories from ever becoming vague or shadowy. On the other hand, Bunyan's youthful experiences of military life and of the prosecution of malignants seem to have given him many suggestions for a vigorous account of the siege of Mansoul and the proceedings against the Diabolonians.

Bunyan the Writer. — Given Bunyan's natural genius, his intense sensibility, almost fanatical fervour, and an imagination expressing itself instinctively in the concrete, the definite, and the matter-of-fact, it is beside the mark to wonder how an uneducated man should fashion for himself such a style as we see at its finest in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. His education was probably the best that could have been prescribed for him. He was brought up among the people for whom he wrote; he spoke and wrote their rich vernacular. He preached to homely congregations with a passion and a moving pathos that came from the depths of his own tormented soul. His eloquence and the language he used were enriched and chastened by his ardent reading of the Bible, to the fine cadences of which hardly any prose comes nearer than his. He had also read much in theological literature, and in books like Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Some of his provincialisms are a little too coarse and racy; but it is noteworthy that, in spite of the purely didactic nature of his aims, he had the taste to eradicate many such blemishes in the later editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan's style is at its richest and most elevated in the description of the ascent of the two pilgrims to the Celestial City. Here is a passage that shows well its qualities of homely vigour and picturesqueness:

> Now, Giant Despair had a wife, and her name was Diffidence. So when he was gone to bed, he told his wife what he had done; to wit, that he had taken a couple of prisoners and cast them into his dungeon, for trespassing on his grounds. Then he asked her also what he had best to do further to them. So she asked him what they were, whence they came, and whither they were bound; and he told her. Then she counselled him that when he arose in the morning he should beat them without mercy. So, when he arose, he getteth him a grievous crab-tree cudgel, and goes down into the dungeon to them, and there first falls to rating of them as if they were dogs, although they never gave him a word of distaste. Then he falls upon them, and beats them fearfully, in such sort, that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done, he withdraws and leaves them, there to condole their misery, and to mourn under their distress. So all that day they spent the time in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations. The next night, she, talking with her husband about them further, and understanding they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away themselves. So when morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner as before, and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them, that since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter, or poison, for why, said he, should you choose life, seeing it is attended with so much bitterness? But they desired him to let them go. With that he looked ugly upon

them, and, rushing to them, had doubtless made an end of them himself, but that he fell into one of his fits (for he sometimes, in sunshiny weather, fell into fits) and lost for a time the use of his hands; wherefore he withdrew, and left them as before, to consider what to do.

LATER ESSAYISTS

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE (1628–99).—Sir William Temple was the able and conscientious diplomatist who tried manfully to save the unpatriotic Government of Charles II. from the consequences of their folly and negligence, by negotiating the Triple Alliance between England and Holland and Sweden in 1668; who arranged the peace after the second war with Holland, brought about the marriage of the Princess Mary to William of Orange, and, after honestly labouring to remedy the evils into which the two Stuart kings had brought the affairs of the nation, withdrew to cultivate gardening and literature in the retreat which he renamed Moor Park, in Surrey.

Works.—Temple's works consist of various political and historical essays, his diplomatic correspondence and *Memoirs of what Passed in Christendom* during his terms of office as ambassador or plenipotentiary, and his *Miscellanea*, which comprise the more strictly literary portion of his writings. Temple was honest, straightforward, and patriotic, at a time when such virtues were at a discount; but he was not a great statesman. The student of history and politics will not learn much from his essays *Upon the Present State and Settlement of Ireland* (1668), *Upon the Original and Nature of Government* (1671), and *Upon the Advancement of Trade in Ireland* (1673), or from his *Observations upon the United Provinces* (1673), or the *Essay upon Taxes* (1693). Temple writes with shrewd knowledge of men and affairs, but was out of his depth in questions of political theory. His *Memoirs*, eked out by his *Letters to the King, the Prince of Orange*, etc., give a lucid account of English and Continental relations, and have much personal and dramatic interest as an intimate narrative of transactions in which the writer bore a leading part. Temple tells his story well, and displays the ease and grace of an accomplished writer. It is style, again, rather than depth or originality, that imparts distinction to the essays in the second volume of his *Miscellanea*. Those "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus," "Of Heroic Virtue," "Of Poetry," and "Upon Antient and Modern Learning," are still most readable discourses in which a cultivated man of the world, widely read but not accurately learned, delivers himself agreeably of observations and opinions that are not very profound.

Style.—Swift and Dr. Johnson eulogized Temple's style, with some injustice to Cowley, Dryden, and the other writers named in this chapter who had performed their share in adapting prose to the requirements of an age that was logical, matter-of-fact, and altogether less prone to enthusiasm and imagination than that which preceded it. "Sir William Temple," Johnson is reported to have said, "was the

first writer who gave cadence to English prose." What he meant by cadence was, of course, something distinct from the poetic melody of Jeremy Taylor or the grandiose movement of Milton and Sir Thomas Browne. Temple did indeed attain, with a uniform success almost unknown before, to the subdued but pleasingly audible music, never suggesting metrical effects, which is the most refined charm of well-balanced and flowing sentences. The artful use of antithesis played a part in giving this sense of cadence; but the antitheses were not forced or intrusive. Temple, in fact, in his finer essays, came very near the well-bred elegance and polished ease that later characterized the work of Addison and Steele.

The shallow nature of Temple's learning as well as the characteristics of his style can be seen in the following paragraph from the essay " Of Heroic Virtue " :

> The Arabian branch of the Saracen empire, after a long and mighty growth in Egypt and Arabia, seems to have been at its height under the great Almanzor, who was the illustrious and renowned hero of this race, and must be allowed to have as much excelled, and as eminently, in learning, virtue, piety, and native goodness, as in power, in valour, and in empire. Yet this was extended from Arabia, through Egypt, and all the northern tracts of Africa, as far as the western ocean, and over all the considerable provinces of Spain. For it was in his time, and by his victorious ensigns, that the Gothic kingdom in Spain was conquered, and the race of those famous princes ended in Rodrigo. All that country was reduced under the Saracen empire (except the mountains of Leon and Oviedo) and were afterwards divided into several Moorish kingdoms, whereof some lasted to the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella : nay the Saracen forces, after the conquest of Spain, invaded the southern parts of France, and proceeded with the same success as far as Tours, till they were beaten and expelled by Charles Martel, who by those exploits raised his renown so high, as to give him the ambition of leaving the kingdom of France to his own line, in Pepin and Charlemain, by the deposition and extinction of the first race, which had lasted from Pharamond.

Temple's Connections with Other Writers. — Many readers who have never looked into Sir William Temple's works are familiar with his name in connection with the delightful letters written to him before their marriage by Dorothy Osborne, or in connection with Swift, who as a young man was his secretary and lived at Moor Park in the same house with " Stella." One of Macaulay's essays gives a very full and patronizing account of Temple's career and character, and relates the story of that controversy on the genuineness of the alleged *Letters of Phalaris* in which Bentley displayed his scholarly acumen, and Atterbury and Boyle, who ill-advisedly edited the *Letters*, came to grief. Temple, with his usual assurance, had taken up the cause of the ancients in the standing quarrel of the time on the relative merits of ancient and modern writers, philosophers, lawgivers, and other sages. This essay of his " Of Antient and Modern Learning " is a masterpiece in mere style, but in point of accurate information goes farther astray than anything he ever wrote. Among the instances of literary superiority in a classical author, Temple unfortunately cited these spurious *Letters*. Boyle brought out his new edition of *Phalaris*, and forthwith the battle was joined. Temple died before the controversy ended in the complete discomfiture of his supporters. His retainer, Swift, loyally took up his patron's cause, without having much interest, however, in its merits, and

has left an entertaining account of the conflict in his witty fable *The Battle of the Books*.

HALIFAX AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.—The famous exponent of moderate courses in politics, George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, wrote a brilliant and humorous essay, *The Character of a Trimmer*, a *Character of Charles II.*, with a witty series of *Thoughts and Reflections*, and *A Lady's Gift, or Advice to a Daughter*, containing many sage aphorisms. Roger North (1653–1734) wrote biographical essays —*Lives of the Norths*, and an *Autobiography*. Related to the essayists and miscellany-writers was Sir Roger L'Estrange, whose activities belong, however, more strictly to the early history of journalism. The title of essay was modestly adopted by philosophers like John Locke, Richard Burthogge, and John Norris, for very substantial treatises, which have little to do with the subject of this section.

John Locke.

PHILOSOPHERS AND SCIENTISTS

JOHN LOCKE (1632–1704).—John Locke, the son of a solicitor and small proprietor in Somerset, was educated at Westminster and at Christ Church, Oxford, where he held a lectureship. He studied medicine, without taking the regular degree, and was appointed physician to the first Earl of Shaftesbury, in whose house he lived for some years. During Shaftesbury's chancellorship, Locke held several government posts; but with the decline of his patron's fortunes he lost these, was expelled from the university, and took refuge in Holland. He wrote much of his *Essay concerning Human Understanding* at Utrecht. The Revolution saved him from further danger from the English Government, and he received appointments as commissioner of appeals and then as commissioner of trade and plantations. From 1691 to his death he lived with Sir Francis and Lady Masham at Oates, in Essex.

Works.—Locke's *Epistola de Tolerantia*, setting forth his religious views, was

written in Latin, but translated into English by William Popple (1689). In 1690 appeared *Two Treatises on Government*, refuting Sir Robert Filmer's defence of the divine right of kings, and arguing that contract or consent is the basis of government, curiously omitting any direct acknowledgment to the work of Hobbes. The *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, on which he had been at work for many years, did not appear till 1690. He published a number of occasional works, like his second and third letters concerning toleration, some theological pamphlets, and one on the currency question. But those among his later works of the most lasting interest were *Some Thoughts concerning Education* (1693) and *The Conduct of the Understanding*, published after his death.

"An Essay concerning Human Understanding." — With the doubtful exception of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Locke was the first English philosopher to investigate the bases of thought, by an inquiry into the nature of the mind and of its relations to the objects of knowledge. His main doctrine is that knowledge is entirely derived from experience, the mind being originally like a sheet of white paper, "void of all characters, without any ideas."

> External and internal sensation are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding. These alone, so far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room.

The *Essay* is divided into four books, treating respectively "Of Innate Notions," "Of Ideas," "Of Word," and "Of Knowledge and Opinion." The first book is a destructive examination of the doctrine of innate ideas.

> It is an established opinion among some men, that there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions, κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, characters, as it were, stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it. It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition, if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions, and may arrive at certainty without any such original notions or principles. For I imagine, any one will easily grant, that it would be impertinent to suppose the ideas of colours innate in a creature to whom God hath given sight, and a power to receive them by the eyes from external objects; and no less unreasonable would it be to attribute several truths to the impressions of nature and innate characters, when we may observe in ourselves faculties fit to attain as easy and certain knowledge of them as if they were originally imprinted on the mind.—*Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, 2, sec. 1.

Locke's Views.—Locke recognizes two sources of ideas, sensation and reflection, the one conveying ideas from external objects into the mind, the other being the perception of the operations of the mind within us, "as it is employed about the ideas it has got." He classified the simple ideas of sensation into primary and secondary, or quantitative and qualitative; the former comprising ideas of extension, number, figure, solidity, motion or rest; the other, impressions received by the senses of seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, which he regarded as having merely a sub-

jective existence. On the support for these qualities, " which we call substance," we have no ideas at all, but only suppositions. The next step in this direction was Berkeley's questioning of the reality of external things, and whether there is any real distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

Locke distinguishes between knowledge and opinion. Knowledge is of two degrees. Intuitive knowledge furnishes us with ideas, but so far as real existence is concerned provides only one certainty, our own existence, which, as Descartes taught, is necessarily implied by our acts of consciousness. Demonstration proves the existence of God, since there must have been something in existence from eternity which has produced the " thinking, perceiving beings, such as we find ourselves to be." Of inferior validity to the knowledge based on intuition or demonstration is that which passes under the name of knowledge, but is nothing more assured than faith or opinion. " Whether there be anything more than barely that idea in our minds ; whether we can thence certainly infer the existence of anything without us, which corresponds to that idea," is a matter on which we may hold practical assumptions, but which lies beyond the sphere of absolute knowledge.

The New Age of Science.—The Stuart kings and Prince Rupert took a keen and practical interest in science, which received an impetus from Bacon's writings and from the inventions now made in instruments and methods. The Royal Society was founded in or about 1660, and was incorporated in 1662. In 1667 Bishop Sprat published his *History of the Royal Society*. Pepys and Evelyn's interest in its proceedings have already been alluded to. The two professors, Wallis and Ward, with whom Hobbes carried on his unfortunate controversy, were distinguished pioneers in the progress of mathematics. Newton published his *Principia* in 1687. Harvey had lectured on the circulation of the blood early in the century. He was followed by the physiologists Sydenham and Glisson. The Hon. Robert Boyle published his *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical* in 1660; and after his death his works on natural philosophy and chemistry, and on the many other subjects in which he took an interest, were published in five volumes folio.

Conclusion.—The close of the 17th century was thus a period contrasting in almost every way with the Elizabethan time, which was at its zenith when the previous century ended. The later progeny of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists had long passed away. It was a prosaic age succeeding the greatest outburst of imagination the English race had ever known. Scientific curiosity, philosophic analysis, reflection on men and manners, had taken the place of poetic creativeness and lyrical exuberance. Prose itself was now completely emancipated from the spell of poetry, and was no longer an amphibious language, only differentiated from verse by the absence of metre. In a sense, this was the birth-time of English prose, as a distinct mode of expression from the language suited to the poets. And now that prose-writers had ceased to ape the poets, poetry on the other hand was becoming prosaic.

The end of the century is, however, no real landmark in literary history. This was the eve of the Augustan age, in which the tendencies we have been following, towards greater correctness, precision, sobriety, and elegance instead of beauty, were to culminate. The essay was to be perfected by Addison and Steele, and controversial writing by Swift. Bentley was to carry scholarship to a higher pitch of exactness; Berkeley and Hume to proceed on the road logically opened by the inquiries of Hobbes and Locke. Finally, the critical spirit of the age, and its creative impulses, finding no longer a natural outlet in poetry and the drama, were to produce the realistic novel.

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Chapter 8. THE LANGUAGE.

Transition.—The 17th century was the period of transition from Early Modern or Tudor English to Modern English proper. Ranging from Ben Jonson and the Metaphysical poets to Dryden and Defoe, the period falls naturally into two sharply contrasted parts, the division between the two being marked by the Restoration of 1660, by which date the final break with the older literary traditions was complete. By 1660 also the Early Modern changes in pronunciation were generally adopted, and definite progress had been made in the standardizing of the spelling.

Literary Usage.—The literature of the first half of the 17th century still reflects the classical learning of the humanists and the pedantry of the later schoolmen. The dramas of Jonson, the conceits of the Metaphysical school, and the Latinized prose of Burton and Browne bear witness to the learned and often pedantic spirit of the day. Latin was still freely used for learned and scientific works, many scholars sharing Bacon's fear that "these modern languages will. . . play the bankrupts with books"; while English prose was garnished with Latin figures and quotations, and affected the weighty Latin sentences and elevated style used by Hooker at the end of the 16th century, or the learned wit of the time of James I. In the second half of the century a noteworthy change in literary style and diction occurred. The works of Cowley (as a prose-writer), Waller, Dryden, and their contemporaries are characterized by a new manner of writing in which the language of the scholar is replaced by the everyday language of society and the town. The new "polite" manner was in part indebted to French influence for its greater lucidity, and its more simple and logical syntax, but the great changes in style and diction were due to the fact that the literature of the late 17th century was a social literature in close connection with everyday life, and that the life which it reflected was not that of the courtier, the scholar, or the rustic, according to the old Elizabethan distinctions, nor the national life as a whole as with Shakespeare, but the life of the middle classes and the town, ranging from the refined and elegant tone of fashion used by the "genteel" Temple and by Congreve, or the vigorous colloquial style of Dryden and the fashionable slang of L'Estrange, to the racy and realistic manner of the man in the street in Defoe. The new literary usage was thus a class usage, and was in close connection with the everyday speech of London, and the Restoration literature of the uncourtly court of Charles II. differed little from the rest in tone. A more homely and general usage survived in the pulpit, and is represented in the *Pilgrim's Progress*

The Spoken Usage.—The more progressive tendencies of 16th-century pronunciation were established for the standard language by 1660. The conservative Dr. Gill complained in 1621 both of these vulgarisms and of the mincing and affected

pronunciation used in his day by the "Mopsæ quæ omnia attenuant" saying "meedz, plee" for "maidz, plai," and "bitsherz miit" when they should say "butsherz meet."[1] This refined pronunciation of *meat* as *mīt* became vulgar in the later 17th century, and was not accepted as standard until well on in the 18th. In the 17th century the pronunciations of *u* as in *but* and *a* as in *hat* became general, also the special developments of vowels before *r* (as in *care, bear, hear, before, bar, for, bird, cur*). Changes in vowel quantity also took place, as in *breath, bread,* etc., where the vowel has been shortened, or *path, father, hard,* etc., where it has been lengthened. These may be due to the influence of class or dialect; *cf.* the modern pronunciations of *path* with *ā* and *ă*. Evidence as to a fashionable affectation at the end of the century is given by Vanbrugh's *Relapse* (1697), where Lord Foppington uses *packet, stap, crawn, pawnd,* for *pocket, stop, crown, pound,* etc.

Spelling.—The modern distinction between the old open and close *e* (*ea* and *ee*, *ie* respectively) and the use of *oa* for open *o* became fixed in the course of the century, and the use of capitals for nouns was given up shortly after the beginning of the 18th.

Syntax and Vocabulary.—The great changes in style and syntax which took place in the 17th century may be gathered from Dryden's criticism of Ben Jonson in his *Defence of the Epilogue of the "Conquest of Granada."* Dryden discusses the refinement which the English of his day has undergone "either in rejecting such old words, or phrases, which are ill-sounding, or improper; or in admitting new, which are more proper, more sounding and more significant." The 17th century witnessed the first "*English Dictionarie,*" published by Cockeram in 1623, which contains a number of inkhorn terms, and adds a second part in which the cultivator of a learned style may find the learned equivalents of ordinary words. The use of inkhornisms was superseded in the latter part of the century by the polite use of French terms, countenanced by Dryden as making "the language. . . more courtly and our thoughts . . . better drest," provided the use were not an exaggerated one, "a turning English into French, rather than a refining of English by French."[2]

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

GILL, A.: *Logonomia Anglica* (1619).—JONSON, BEN: *The English Grammar* (1640).—COOPER, C.: *Grammatica Lingua Anglicano* (1685), ed. J. D. Jones (Halle, 1912).—DIERBERGER, J.: *Drydens Reime* (Freiburg, 1895).—HORN, W.: *Historische neuenglische Grammatik* (1908).—MAYHEW and SKEAT: *Glossary of Tudor and Stuart Words* (Clarendon Press, 1913).—WYLD, H. C. K.: *History of Modern Colloquial English* (Fisher Unwin, 1920).—ZACHRISSEN: *Pronunciation of English Vowels.*

[1] A similar reference to contemporary affectation occurs in the *Writing Scholar's Companion* (1695): "at London, where to avoid a broad clownish speaking, we are too apt to run into the contrary Extream of an affected way of speaking perhaps too fine."

[2] *Essays*, ed. W. P. Ker, p. 162.

SECTION V
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

Politically, the age, with despotism evicted, was content to accept a Whig oligarchy in which factions contended for place. Walpole maintained peace and material prosperity till he fell before a flame of war fanned by his opponents. Chatham was victorious over France and Spain, and the attempt of George III. to restore personal rule was foiled through the ruin of his American policy. Political principle was resuscitated by Chatham, Burke, and Rockingham, and upheld by the younger Pitt, a disciple of Adam Smith. Government by party began to supplant faction, and the reform of Parliament was balked only by the reaction due to the French Revolution, when Pitt was dragged into war against " a propagandist religion in arms."

Intellectually, the rationalism rising naturally from the principles of Locke found early expression in the writings of Collins, Tindal, and others, and was associated with Toryism by Bolingbroke and later by Hume. Locke's own doctrine, accepting Christianity, was maintained by the Whig divines. Against both schools stood the High Churchmen, many of them Jacobites, and all upholding the authority of the clergy. In all these schools logical and historical argument was usually of more account than spiritual life. Among exceptional men were, on the one hand, the Arian Clarke, and on the other the nonjuror Law, author of the *Serious Call*. No school appealed to the general religious feeling, and the ground lay open for the enthusiasm of Wesley, which became a lasting power owing to its deep sense of religion.

In science the genius of Newton had opened the road to new discoveries in mathematics and astronomy, and Henry Cavendish led the way in chemistry and physics. In classical science Bentley showed himself the greatest of scholars, but after his death the universities sank into intellectual torpor. In economics the greatest event was the publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, a book of incomparable effect. In applied science the latter half of the century saw the invention of the spinning-jenny and the mule, while the restoration of the roads and the making of canals led to the development of collieries, potteries, and weaving.

Authorship was still no path to wealth. All parties united to buy Pope's *Homer*, and all his works had a market, but few writers made a living. The age of patronage was ending, and the reading public was as yet small. A few country towns,

such as Norwich and Lichfield, had literary circles. Some country gentlemen, like Browne Willis, bought books, but the Squire Hardcastles had few and the Squire Westerns none. Some clergymen collected apologetic divinity. A few histories, like Robertson's, sold well, and Burke's later works like wildfire. Goldsmith got £40 for *The Traveller*, and £60 for *The Vicar of Wakefield*; Johnson £400 in all for the *Lives of the Poets*, though the publishers, if asked, would have given more. The publishers of Robertson's *History of Scotland* made £6,000. Few playwrights earned much, but Gay had £700 for *The Beggar's Opera*, and Goldsmith some £500 by each of his comedies. Good painters did well, and music had a vogue.

Large fortunes were rare. Ancestral Jamaica plantations and a long minority started the younger Beckford with £150,000 a year, while of the old nobility the Duke of Bedford came first with an income of £30,000. Shelburne said that any one could have all he wanted on an income of £5,000. Many estates were impoverished by gambling, some constitutions by the bottle.

For travelling none but the main roads were easy, at least in winter. The family coach was giving way to the post-chaise or, for such impatient travellers as Chatham, the whisky or gig. For cheaper wayfaring there was the stage-coach, becoming speedier, and the wagon, which took goods as well as humble passengers, and was slow.

In theory education changed little in this period, though in practice Oxford and Cambridge improved towards its end. The training was based on Latin, Greek, and —though not everywhere—mathematics. Westminster and Eton were the fashionable schools. At one or the other were all the Prime Ministers, except four who were bred at home, and almost all the secretaries of state. In the towns the small grammar schools not only taught many sons of the clergy, lesser gentry, and larger tradesmen, but also gave poor boys a chance of learning and advancement—witness Johnson and divers bishops. In the rural districts the classes below the gentry had little education. The peasantry were often not far removed from serfdom, and mostly restricted to the parish of their birth.

The policing of the country was bad, highway and other robberies were common. The criminal law was cruel; the death penalty very frequent, and often enforced for petty offences. The prisons and the madhouses were places of horror, but towards the end of the century Howard's exertions prepared the way for reform.

Chapter 2. ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

The Man.—Born in London, the son of a Roman Catholic merchant of gentle blood, Pope was small of stature and slightly deformed. Except in his earliest years he never enjoyed health, a fact which explains some of his moral faults. Among these malice and mendacity are conspicuous. Into some errors he was led by a vanity stimulated by his early and lasting success. Again, he did not know how to stand alone, and in turn Swift, Bolingbroke, and Warburton had over him a command which was not always for his good.

Alexander Pope.
(From a picture by William Hoare.)

At the age of eleven he went with his father to live at Binfield in Windsor Forest, and the boyhood years spent there have left traces in his earlier works. He was largely self-taught, steeping himself especially in English and Latin poetry. Like Ovid he "lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came." He was encouraged by Sir William Trumbull, a neighbour and a retired secretary of state, and a translation of Statius, made when he was about fourteen, was followed two or three years later by the *Pastorals*, not published until 1709. The pastoral form, as used by Virgil and Milton, might still be a young poet's legitimate medium for expressing his emotions and his thoughts on life. Pope at seventeen was too young to make an effective use of this vehicle; the verses are imitative, but here and there have real feeling, and a melody which falls short only of the great masters of the shepherds' verse. Their promise, however, was unfulfilled—the spirit of the age and intercourse with critics and men of letters led their author along other lines.

Pope's "Correctness" and Classicism.—Two small poets and critics of the previous generation, whose acquaintance Pope made about this time, and of whom he wrote some thirty years later,

> Granville the polite
> And knowing Walsh would tell me I could write,

did something to turn the bent of his mind. Walsh, in particular, advised him to

make it his study and aim to be " correct," for " though we had several great poets, we never had one great poet that was correct." The epithet has often been misunderstood. Rightly or wrongly Walsh held that our poets had been a disorderly troop, unwilling to put their pens under law. The poet's freedom had in England degenerated into licence, and a remedy must be sought in order. Pope accepted this view, and expressed it at large in the *Essay on Criticism* (1711).

" Essay on Criticism " and " The Rape of the Lock."—The *Essay* is a call to return to the ancient classical models and the critical principles of Aristotle, Longinus, and Quintilian, forgotten in the Middle Ages but revived in the 16th century by Erasmus and by Vida ; in the view of Walsh and Pope neither Shakespeare nor Milton, nor even Dryden, had been disciplined to those principles. On Pope's life it had two immediate effects : it led to a lasting quarrel with John Dennis, a critic of more ability than good temper, and to a brief friendship with Addison, who praised the poem. For the moment Pope had found another subject for his pen. Lord Petre, a lad of twenty, and " little for his age," was wooing Miss Arabella Fermor, but gave her grievous offence by cutting off a lock of her hair—an offence not diminished by his promptly marrying another lady. Both the Petres and the Fermors were Roman Catholics, and the family quarrel distressed Pope's friend John Caryll, who was of the same persuasion. His suggestion that a playful poem might bring about a reconciliation led to *The Rape of the Lock* (1712). It is a mock-heroic poem characterized by Addison in a phrase of Afranius as *merum sal*, " undiluted wit." In its first form (it was afterwards much enlarged and elaborated) it achieved a success as sudden, as resounding, and as permanent as any in our history. It remains for all time the true reflex of the social and literary grace of a classic age, and a perfect model of delicate satire. Perhaps if Miss Fermor had recognized this she might have refused assent to its publication.

Literary Friendships and Polemics.—Meantime Pope's friendship with Addison prospered, and when, early in 1713, Addison was about to produce his tragedy of *Cato*, he got Pope to write him an eloquent prologue. Pope, though he could win true affection, must have been quarrelsome by nature. He had already thrown over a friendship with the septuagenarian Wycherley, and in the *Essay on Criticism*, after a mock compliment paid to Dennis by name, he assailed him under the pseudonym of Appius, as one who

> reddens at each word you speak,
> And stares tremendous with a threat'ning eye.

Dennis replied with a fierce pamphlet, and Pope sought vengeance by an underhand stratagem—a method which thenceforward became part of his regular practice. In pretence he was defending Addison, and Addison had no course but to disavow his action. Pope was offended, and found further offence in the *Spectator's* praise of Ambrose Philips's rival *Pastorals*. Pope also disagreed with Addison's politics, and

in his poem of *Windsor Forest*, published a few weeks before the production of *Cato*, at Granville's suggestion he praised the Tory Peace of Utrecht. An acquaintance with Swift followed, and Pope began to find his friends among the Tories.

Descriptive Poetry.—*Windsor Forest* as a descriptive poem was suggested by Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and Wordsworth found in it some new images of external nature. Like its original it passes from nature to historical associations. It has been called declamatory, but it has truly poetic qualities. The description of the retired politician, typified by Sir William Trumbull, may owe something to Dryden, but is none the less lofty and sincere.

"The Rape of the Lock" improved.—*The Rape of the Lock* had been a great success, and Pope now thought he could make it a greater. His mock epic had so far nothing that answered to the gods and goddesses of Homer and his followers. It occurred to him to introduce the gnomes and sylphs who were said to figure in the Rosicrucian mysteries. He mentioned his design to Addison, who expressed his fear that this might only mar a perfect work of art. Pope nevertheless persevered, and his elemental spirits are certainly a delightful parody of such epic machinery as Virgil's Juno and Jupiter. Characteristically, Pope never forgave Addison for his overprudent advice. Neither Addison nor any one else was yet fully conscious of the extent of Pope's powers.

In this poem he showed much acquaintance with the fashionable world. Among his friends near Binfield was an ancient Roman Catholic family, the Blounts of Mapledurham. There were two daughters, Teresa and Martha, the latter two years younger than Pope. The poet seems to have owed many of his acquaintances to them, and, though he quarrelled with Teresa, Martha remained his friend through life. A friendship with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a leader of society and a woman of letters, had a less fortunate issue. The two were close friends from 1717, but some six years later they quarrelled, and thenceforward "Sappho," as he called Lady Mary, was the object of his malignant satire.

Translation of the "Iliad."—As early as 1708 Trumbull had suggested to Pope that he should translate the *Iliad*, one book of which he had already attempted. Other friends now gave him the same advice, and society, both the literary and the fashionable, was ready to welcome his work. The undertaking took him five years, the first volume appearing in 1715, and the sixth and last in 1720.

Pope's *Iliad* has enjoyed continuous popularity. This popularity was, in fact, foretold in the contemporary criticism of the great Grecian, Richard Bentley: "A fine poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." The work lives not only because it is a fine poem, but actually because it is not Homer. A good translation aims at producing in the reader the same effect, so far as may be, as is produced by

the original. That effect is not constant through the ages, and thus every generation or two there will be a call for a new version. Pope's poem is one that we can almost conceive him to have written if he had never read Homer's. The divine simplicity of Homer, supposed in Pope's day to be the product of a primitive age, was in fact no mere gift of nature, but the deliberate and consummate art of an advanced, if not a decaying, civilization. Pope made no attempt to be simple on the one hand, or to be archaic on the other. His style in his translation was the natural style of his age and of his own mind. In that fact and in his consummate powers lies the secret of his lasting success. His poetical diction, his choice of words, his turn of phrase, are not always those of the present day; but the ordinary reader will never find in them anything that seems forced or pedantic. Englishmen from age to age may demand other versions to show them what the real Homer was, but they will not cease to read our poet's translation as the real Pope.

Pope's Villa at Twickenham.

The version of the *Odyssey*, made later, was hardly a success. Pope was weary, and turned over half the work to Broome and Fenton, who caught his manner well enough; but the charm of the splendid story disappears in the heroic couplet. In the *Iliad* Pope could create his own atmosphere, but his *Odyssey* seems to have none. The translation was published in 1725 and 1726.

Pope's Life at Twickenham.—Homer brought Pope about £9,000, and this, added to his patrimony, his father having died in 1717, made him a man of some wealth. In 1719 he took the house at Twickenham which has ever since been known as "Pope's villa." Here he lived with his mother, to whom he was devoted and who survived until 1733, at times affectionately tended by Martha Blount.

The *Iliad* led to a further estrangement from Addison, whose friend Tickell had also intended a translation, but gave it up on hearing of Pope's. He had, however, done one book, and this he published in 1715, to bespeak favour, he said, for a translation of the *Odyssey*. Pope was absurdly infuriated, and wrote the spiteful lines on Addison which appeared in 1723 and were afterwards incorporated in the

Epistle to Arbuthnot. Addison never saw the lines, and, it would seem, refused to quarrel with Pope.

"Eloisa to Abelard."—In 1717 appeared the two sentimental poems *Eloisa to Abelard* and the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady.* The former followed somewhat closely an inaccurate prose version of the Latin letters, the latter was suggested by the troubles of a friend of his own. Both poems were long regarded as models of pathos, and it can hardly be denied that the feeling in them is genuine. Nor must it be forgotten that the heroic couplet was to Pope the natural means of expressing strong emotion. Further, in his hands the couplet lent itself to an epigrammatic turn, and, however pathetic a single epigram may be, a modern reader does not readily associate pathos with a succession of epigrams. Nevertheless, *Eloisa to Abelard* is alive with romance and dramatic power. The language is often exquisite, and Walsh, had he lived to read the poem, must have praised it as an example of correctness.

In the same volume with these two poems appeared the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,* written some time before. It is Pope's chief adventure in this kind, and it shows that lyric feeling and the lyric form were beyond his powers.

The "Essay on Man."—The succeeding years were chiefly occupied by the *Odyssey* and the *Dunciad,* the latter a bitter satire upon the more unfortunate of his literary contemporaries. In 1723 Bolingbroke returned from exile, renewed an acquaintance with Pope, and exercised a strong influence on the remainder of the poet's life. Bolingbroke, after the failure of his political career, had set up for a philosopher. He had no consistent system, but may be described as a rationalist with a tendency to pantheism. He set Pope to write a philosophic poem, of which he supplied the material in prose fragments, while Pope pieced them together, turned them into verse, and supplied the poetical illustrations. The result was the four books of the *Essay on Man* (1733–4). Since Pope had no philosophy, and Bolingbroke was no more than a reckless amateur, the poem has little philosophic value. Pope did not even recognize the rationalistic tendency of Bolingbroke's lucubrations. Though no devout Romanist, he never had any thought of leaving his Church, and he genuinely believed his work to be what it claimed to be—a vindication of the ways of God to man. This it is not, but it has high qualities both ethical and poetic. It is full of humanity, and, although Pope belonged to a Church which, through the folly of James II., was exposed to persecution, he had a wholesome hatred of bigotry. Though the work is all patches, many of the passages are surpassingly brilliant. Their substance was often borrowed from some philosophical writer—they were, so to speak, episodes, not of necessity in real consonance with his theme—but by crispness and terseness, by illustration and by melody, Pope made them his own.

The "Moral Essays."—Connected with the *Essay on Man,* long the most popular

of Pope's works, were the four *Moral Essays*, a title devised by Warburton, whose vigorous brutality about this time made a conquest of Pope. The fourth, called originally " Of Taste " and afterwards " Of the Use of Riches," was the first written (1731). It was addressed to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington, who, by publishing some designs of Palladio and Inigo Jones and by stealing Wren's plans, had won reputation as an architect. It satirizes under the name of Timon the Duke of Chandos, who had made a vast fortune as paymaster of the forces and built a costly and tasteless villa at Stanmore. Next came the third, also entitled " Of the Use of Riches " (1733), and containing the just praise of the Man of Ross and a satire on the *novus homo* in smart society. The first, " Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men " (1733), deals with the ruling passion. The second, " Of the Characters of Women " (1735), is rather satirical than moral; in spite of his affection for his mother and for Martha Blount, Pope held a low opinion of the other sex. These essays mark Pope's transition to Horatian satire, on which he was chiefly occupied until 1738. After that year his bodily powers soon began to fail; but he prepared new editions of his works, and in 1742 added a fourth book to the *Dunciad*.

Pope's Letters.—Pope's letters to Swift, Bolingbroke, and others were largely doctored by himself before publication. There is in them much affectation, but with him affectation had almost become second nature. This was in part the result of the literary battles in which he was often the challenger without the physical strength to endure them, or the moral confidence to save himself from acute suffering. Nevertheless, those who will can find in the letters some signs of his better nature. There is genuine affection and generous feeling to set against the venom and the falsehoods which disfigure the brilliancy of his work as a man of literature.

Pope died peacefully at Twickenham on May 30, 1744, having just completed his fifty-sixth year. (For other works, see p. 329.)

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—POPE, ALEXANDER: *Works*, ed. Whitwell, Elwin, and W. J. Courthope (10 vols., Murray, 1871–89); *Poetical Works*, ed. Sir A. W. Ward (Globe ed., Macmillan, 1869).

Studies.—STEPHEN, Sir L.: *Pope* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1880).

Chapter 3. OTHER POETS OF THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

Prior—Parnell—Gay—Goldsmith

Introductory.—Amongst the secondary writers of the time of Queen Anne none is more representative of the "spirit of the age" than are Prior, Parnell, and Gay. Prior and Gay were essentially poets of "The Town." They were "men of the world," for whom the writing of poetry was a mere diversion, a light amusement rather than a high and serious calling.[1] Their verse is predominantly "social verse" in a predominantly social age. Parnell, too, loved the town, and passed most of his life amongst the literary circles of London. Nevertheless, his poetry shows an appreciation of nature greater than that of any of his minor contemporaries. The range of these poets is limited, but within their limits they are master craftsmen.

Goldsmith was by temperament a poet of type similar to Prior, Parnell, and Gay, and in some of his light verse the resemblance is clearly revealed. But, antagonistic as he was in theory to Gray and others of his time who felt the first stirrings of romance, he could not escape the changed influences of his own age, so that in his verse there often sounds a deeper note, a more intimate emotion, a touch of sentiment, alien from the Augustan temper.

MATTHEW PRIOR (1664–1721)

Life and Character.—Matthew Prior was born in Middlesex in 1664. His father, a joiner, moved to London, where Matthew attended Westminster School. Upon his father's death the boy worked in his uncle's wine-shop in London. The Earl of Dorset, finding him studying Horace, sent him back to Westminster. In 1683 Prior entered St. John's College, Cambridge, as a scholar, graduated B.A. in 1686, and was elected fellow of his college in 1688.

In 1690, by Dorset's aid, Prior began his career as a public servant. For some years he was secretary to Lord Dursley, English Ambassador at the Hague. Later, he was secretary to the British Embassy in Paris. He returned to England in 1699; in 1700 he entered Parliament as a Whig, but later joined the Tories, by whom he was employed in various political offices. Upon the fall of the Tories he was imprisoned (1715–17). After his release he lived in comfortable retirement by means of the help of friends and the proceeds of his poems. He died of a fever on September 18, 1721.

[1] "Poetry, which by the bent of my Mind might have become the Business of my life, was by the happyness of my Education only the Amusement of it."—Prior, *Essay upon Learning*. Prior says elsewhere that his poems are "the Product of his leisure Hours, who had Business enough upon his Hands and was only a Poet by Accident."—Preface to *Poems on Several Occasions*.

Works.—The poems upon which Prior's fame rests are to be found in the various editions of his *Poems on Several Occasions*, the chief collection being that dated 1718.[1] His attempts at the fashionable Pindaric Ode (e.g., *Carmen Seculare*, "For the Year 1700"—an ode to William III.) are of no value. Many of his poems were published as broadsides; hence some verses attributed to him are not certainly known to be his. His first published work, *The Hind and the Panther Transvers'd to the Story of the Country-Mouse and the City-Mouse* (1687), is a travesty of Dryden's *Hind and the Panther*, and was written in collaboration with Charles Montagu. *Down Hall* appeared in 1723. Prior's prose works, his *Essays* and *Dialogues of the Dead* (not published until 1907), deserve high praise. They are in the line of Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* and Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*.

Characteristics.—The gay, wanton, somewhat artificial muse of Prior, about whose paint and powder there still clings something of Restoration coarseness, has a French vivacity and variability, so that even amidst her most riotous laughter tears are seldom far from her eyes. Prior lives to-day, not by the odes written to William or Anne, or to celebrate British victories—odes inspired by political ambition;[2] not even by the once famous *English Ballad on the Taking of Namur* (1695), a clever parody of Boileau's *Ode sur la Prise de Namur;* but by his light, occasional verse.

Prior would undoubtedly have made a clever satirist; but he avoided satire, fearing that it might make enemies, and hinder the accomplishment of worldly success.[3] At times the poet attempted the serious or semi-serious didactic verse typical of the 18th century. He thought the dull poem *Solomon* his best work, and Wesley and Cowper gave it high praise. In *Henry and Emma* he turned the fine old ballad of *The Nut-Browne Maide* into weak verse. In *Alma*, a humorous and speculative poem on the relations of the soul and body, a work written during the time of his imprisonment, the poet follows in the wake of *Hudibras*.

He had much of Chaucer's sly humour, and it is not strange that he attempted *Two Imitations of Chaucer*, and also wrote several tales in verse in which the mingled humour and coarseness of much of the *Canterbury Tales* is to be found. Prior's poetic exemplar is Horace. He is a master of that "familiar style"[4] in poetry which runs through the work of Cowper, Thackeray,[5] "Thomas Ingoldsby," Locker-Lampson, Praed, and Calverley to Austin Dobson. It is in his occasional social verse that the real, lovable Prior speaks to us. He is indeed an 18th-century Herrick. His "Cloes" are but Augustan "Julias," sometimes with an added touch of temper.

[1] Published 1719. See *Life* by Bickley, p. 250.

[2] e.g., *To the King*, 1695; *An Ode, humbly inscrib'd to the Queen*; *On the glorious success of Her Majesty's arms*, 1706; etc.

[3] See *Essay upon Learning.—Works*, ed. Waller, II. 185.

[4] See Cowper's Letter to William Unwin, January 17, 1782.

[5] "Prior's seem to me among the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous of English lyrical poems."—Thackeray, *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*.

To be vext at a Trifle or two that I writ,
Your Judgment at once, and my Passion You wrong:
You take that for Fact, which will scarce be found Wit:
Od's Life! must One swear to the Truth of a Song?

It is to the strain of such dancing anapæsts as these that the Bohemian Prior lightly pursues his loves and quarrels, in defiance of the fashionable decasyllabic and octosyllabic couplet. He has Herrick's pseudo-paganism, born of Horace and the Greek Anthology,[1] Herrick's love of women and wine.

Venus, take my Votive Glass,
Since I am not what I was;
What from this Day I shall be,
Venus, let Me never see.

His humour is at its best inimitable: delicate, airy, with an occasional undertone of sadness, as in his verses *For My Own Monument* and *To a Child of Quality*. This same delicacy of touch is found in the delightful narrative poem *Down Hall*.

Prior's great virtue as a poet is his intense realism. He demands life, with all its noise, colour, change, crudity. He has no sympathy for the "sauntering Jacks and idle Joans" of the world.

Nor Good, nor Bad, nor Fools, nor Wise;
They wou'd not learn, nor cou'd advise:
Without Love, Hatred, Joy, or Fear,
They led—a kind of—as it were:
Nor Wish'd, nor Car'd, nor Laugh'd, nor Cry'd:
And so They liv'd; and so They dy'd.

The poet's sympathies were rather with that "Jinny the Just" who

. . . read and Accounted & payd & abated,
Eat and drank, Play'd and Work't, laugh't and Cry'd, lov'd and hated,
As answer'd the end of her being Created.

In more serious mood Prior penned those verses which found their way long afterwards to the heart of Sir Walter Scott:[2]

The Man in graver Tragic known
(Tho' his best Part long since was done)
Still on the Stage desires to tarry:
And He who play'd the *Harlequin*,
After the Jest still loads the Scene,
Unwilling to retire, tho' Weary.

Prior indeed expressed the twofold aspect of his character in the thoughtless verses which Johnson records:

Et je suis triste quand je crie
Bannissons la Mélancholie.[3]

[1] See *More Literary Recreations*, by Sir Edward Cook (1919), pp. 345–6.
[2] See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, 2nd ed. (1853), pp. 738–9.
[3] See Johnson's *Lives*, ed. Hill, II. 199.

Basking in the light of his laughter, men have overlooked the shadows that reveal it as often but the sunshine of an April day.

THOMAS PARNELL (1679–1718)

Life and Character.—Thomas Parnell was born and educated in Dublin. He took holy orders in 1700, and in 1706 became Archdeacon of Clogher. Grief for the death of his young wife in 1706, after five years of married life, caused him to fall into intemperate habits.[1] He died at Chester while returning to Ireland. Parnell was a friend of Swift and Pope, a member of the Scriblerus Club, and a contributor to the *Spectator*. He was fond of society, and, detesting life in Ireland, spent most of his time in London. Oliver Goldsmith wrote a *Life* of the poet.

Works.—Parnell's fame, such as it is, rests chiefly upon *The Hermit*, the *Hymn to Contentment*, an *Allegory on Man*, and a *Night Piece on Death*. His poems were published after his death in a volume entitled *Poems on Severall Occasions*.[2] This volume was edited by Pope, who wisely suppressed some pieces. *Posthumous Works* appeared in 1758, provoking Gray to remark, "Parnell is the dunghill of Irish Grub-street."[3] He also published, in 1717, a translation of the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*. Parnell's prose works include an uninteresting *Essay on the Different Stiles of Poetry* (1713), and an *Essay on Homer* (1715), prefixed to Pope's translation of the *Iliad*.

Characteristics.—Parnell, Augustan though he was, bears in his poetry the marks of a period of literary transition. In *A Night Piece on Death* and *A Hymn to Contentment* we find the moralizing, didactic spirit of the 18th century, expressed with a certain felicity of diction and charm of style. In the first of these poems Parnell to some extent anticipates Gray's *Elegy* and the "Churchyard School" which followed Young's *Night Thoughts*. There is real feeling for nature in such lines as these:

> How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
> Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,
> While through their ranks in silver pride
> The nether crescent seems to glide!
> The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,
> The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
> Where once again the spangled show
> Descends to meet our eyes below.
> The grounds which on the right aspire,
> In dimness from the view retire:
> The left presents a place of graves,
> Whose wall the silent water laves.

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[1] Alternative cause given by Ruffhead, *Life* of Pope, p. 492, note.
[2] Published 1721. See *Poems*, ed. G. A. Aitken (1894), p. xlix.
[3] Gray's *Letters*, ed. D. C. Tovey (1900–12), II. 37.

That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
" Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest."

A Hymn to Contentment shows a similar blending of description of nature with moralizing thought. There is an exquisite simplicity and directness in the following passage which takes it far from the usual manner of 18th-century verse :

Lovely, lasting peace, appear !
This world itself, if thou art here,
Is once again with Eden blest,
And man contains it in his breast.

'Twas thus, as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
The branches whisper as they wav'd :
It seem'd, as all the quiet place
Confess'd the presence of the Grace.

The Hermit, the best known of Parnell's verses, is a moral, narrative poem. The story was not new, but Parnell tells it with real skill. In Parnell there also lingered something of the lighter music of late Caroline song.

When thy beauty appears,
In its graces and airs,
All bright as an angel new dropt from the sky ;
At distance I gaze, and am aw'd by my fears,
So strangely you dazzle my eye !

In *A Fairy Tale* Parnell brings us amongst the fairies into a world of the supernatural—a world soon to be almost lost to English poetry for nearly a century :

In Britain's isle and Arthur's days,
When midnight fairies daunc'd the maze.

He can, when he pleases, be vulgar in the manner of Swift and Prior, but there is a touch of the true poet in the man who in *Elysium,* a forerunner of Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women,* sings of " the beauties slain by tender passion " :

They range the reeds, and o'er the poppies sweep,
That nodding bend beneath their load of sleep.

Few readers of Parnell's works to-day would repeat Goldsmith's eulogies of him, but it is possible to argue that amongst the minor poets of the 18th century Parnell has received less than his due share of attention.

JOHN GAY (1685–1732)

Life.—John Gay was born and educated at Barnstaple. Much of his early history is obscure. His parents died while he was a child. He was later apprenticed to a silk mercer in London, but, disliking the trade, he soon procured his release. Gay lived in London, but for a time he is only a shadowy figure of whom little is known. The publication of *Wine*, in 1708, shows that by this time he had commenced his career as a poet. He obtained admission into the literary society of London, and became the intimate friend of Pope and Swift. He was secretary to the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth (1712), and later to Lord Clarendon during his embassy to Hanover. After the death of Queen Anne, Gay once more turned to literature for support, and in 1728 achieved success, wealth, and political notoriety by his operas. His last years were spent in the household of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. He had several reverses of fortune in life, the most severe being the loss of his money in the collapse of the South Sea Bubble, but he died a rich man. Gay was a lazy, indolent person, of great good-humour and real charm. He longed for court favour, to which he never attained. He was accorded an ornate funeral, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

John Gay
(S. Kensington Museum.)

Works: Poems.—Gay's first published work *Wine* (1708), is a dull poem in blank verse obviously inspired by John Philips's *Cyder* (1708). In 1713 appeared *Rural Sports*, dedicated to Pope, and *The Fan*, a poem in three books. An advance was made in 1714 with *The Shepherd's Week*, a set of six pastorals. *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, appeared in 1716, and Gay's *Fables* in 1727. A second series of *Fables* was published in 1738, after the poet's death.

Plays.—Gay's plays and operas include *The Mohocks* (1712); *The Wife of Bath* (1713); *The What d'ye Call It* (1715); *Three Hours after Marriage* (1717), written

in collaboration with Pope and Arbuthnot; *The Captives* (1724); *The Beggar's Opera* (1728); *Polly* (1729); *Acis and Galatea* (1732).

Characteristics.—Like Prior and other writers of the day, Gay sought in literature an aid to political and social success. His *Rural Sports* shows some feeling for natural scenery, but the form of expression is conventional and stilted. It was, perhaps, a subconscious memory of Gay's description, in *Rural Sports*, of the time

> when the ploughman leaves the task of day,
> And trudging homeward whistles on his way,

that inspired part of the opening stanza of Gray's *Elegy*. Gay's attachment to Pope led to the writing of *The Shepherd's Week*. A critic in the *Guardian* had annoyed Pope by extravagantly praising Ambrose Philips's *Pastorals*, while at the same time he ignored those of Pope himself. Pope not only retaliated in person, but set Gay to write a series of burlesque pastorals, in which the characters should speak and act with all the crudeness of rustic simplicity. Gay began the work in the style of burlesque, but soon deviated into serious effort, the result being a series of witty pictures of the country as he knew it, pictures not destitute of charm. The influence of Virgil and Spenser as masters of the eclogue is seen in Gay's work. He even attempts an archaic, Spenserian manner of speech. The 18th century, dominated as it was by Virgil and the Classics, was pre-eminently fond of pastoral verse. Gay's is notable as a first attempt at realistic pastoral (an attempt continued by Allan Ramsay in *The Gentle Shepherd*) at a time when the artificial pastoral of Pope and his followers was in fashion.

Gay meant, as part of the humour of the burlesque, to be realistic:

> Thou wilt not find my shepherdesses idly piping on oaten reeds, but milking the kine, tying up the sheaves, or if the hogs are astray driving them to the styes. My shepherd gathereth none other nosegays but what are the growth of our own fields; he sleepeth not under myrtle shades, but under a hedge; nor doth he vigilantly defend his flocks from wolves, because there are none.

But the country was to hold Gay no more in his art than in his life.

> Farewell!—The city calls me from your bowers:
> Farewell, amusing thoughts and peaceful hours!

the poet exclaims at the conclusion of his *Rural Sports*. In *The Fan* he had dealt with that artificial world whose epic is Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, but in *Trivia* he deliberately chooses London as the inspiration of his song. The poem is a vivid and interesting description of "The Town" in his own day. Gay wrote to his friends a number of the *Epistles* in verse so fashionable at the time, the most important of which is the truly delightful *Welcome from Greece*, written to Pope upon the latter's completion of his translation of the *Iliad*. The influence of "The Town" combined with his earlier love of country verse to produce a number of *Town Eclogues* whose spirit is that of *Trivia*.

Occasionally Gay tried his hand at serious, didactic verse, as in *A Contemplation on Night* and *A Thought on Eternity*, poems closely resembling Parnell's *Night Piece* and *Hymn to Contentment*. In his *Fables* Gay incorporated the didacticism of his day with his own sprightly humour and narrative power.

It was as a playwright that Gay reached complete success. *The What d'ye Call It* is a burlesque of the drama of the day. *Three Hours after Marriage*, a play in which Gay was assisted by Pope and Arbuthnot, was a failure. In 1728 Gay's *Beggar's Opera* appeared. It owed its inception to a remark of Swift made long before, that " A Newgate pastoral might make an odd, pretty sort of thing." Three years earlier Gay had written a ballad of a highwayman, entitled *Newgate's Garland*. He now, under cover of a ballad-opera, attacked the Government of Walpole, and at the same time ridiculed the popular Italian opera, which Addison had already burlesqued in *Rosamond* (1707).

The freshness of this new departure in opera, the charm of the songs and of their fair singers, and the political interest associated with the play, combined to make it a complete success. Ladies carried songs from it on their fans, and worked them upon screens for their drawing-rooms, while it became famous as the play which made " Rich [the manager] gay, and Gay rich." A sequel, *Polly*, was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; but, although unacted upon the public stage, a huge demand was created for the book.

Of the remainder of Gay's works little need be said. Excellent as are his *Fables*, famous as is the *Beggar's Opera*, it is by the songs he wrote for that opera[1] and others that his name still survives. He was in his way a great song-writer and balladist. Something of the cadenced song-note of the 17th century lingers in such verses as these:

Love in her eyes sits playing,
And sheds delicious death;
Love in her lips is straying,
And warbling in her breath:

Love on her breast sits panting,
And swells with soft desire:
Nor grace, nor charm, is wanting
To set the heart on fire.

Despite obvious artifice, there is very real charm in such verses as *Sweet William's Farewell to Black-eyed Susan*, in *O ruddier than the cherry*, and *'Twas when the seas were roaring*, which closes in a delightful stanza of artificial simplicity:

[1] Warton, Cowper, and others believed that Pope and Swift collaborated with Gay in the writing of these songs, but according to Spence they are the work of Gay alone. See Pope's *Works*, ed. Elwin and Courthope, VII. 126, note 2; VIII. 147; Cowper's letter to William Unwin, August 4, 1783; Warton's *Pope*.

All melancholy lying,
Thus wail'd she for her dear;
Repay'd each blast with sighing,
Each billow with a tear;

When o'er the white wave stooping,
His floating corpse she spy'd;
Then, like a lily drooping,
She bow'd her head. and dy'd.

It must be remembered that in an age dominated by the heroic couplet of Dryden and Pope, Gay kept open the door for the lyrical measures of Byron and Swinburne when he wrote such stanzas as:

The school-boy's desire is a play-day;
The school-master's joy is to flog;
The milk-maid's delight is on May-day;
But mine is on sweet Molly Mog.

Something of Swift's cynicism animates Gay's famous epitaph on himself:

Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it.

Gay is not a great poet. Even his songs are the artificial product of an artificial age. The stage atmosphere of candle-light, cardboard, and tinsel is about them. If we seek to break these mock butterflies of poetry on the wheel of academic criticism we can easily do so. If we drag them away from the footlights out into the sunlight, and show their glue, their paint, their falsity, we must trample them in the gutter. But to do so would be foolish. Placed in the setting for which they were intended they are a triumphant success. The wise man will not destroy a Dresden figure because it is not a Greek statue, and the wise reader of English poetry will not entirely ignore the voice of Gay.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

(For other works see pp. 375, 378)

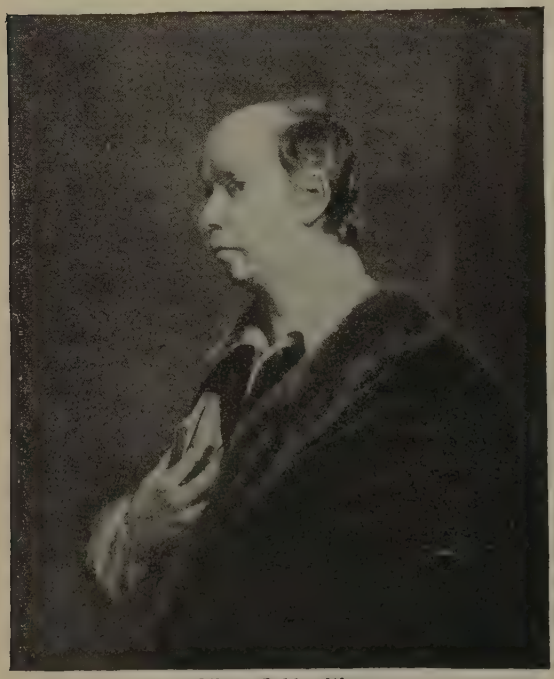
Life.—Oliver Goldsmith was born on November 10, 1728,[1] at Pallas,[2] a village in the county of Longford in Ireland, where his father was clergyman. In 1744 he entered Trinity College, Dublin. He graduated B.A. in 1749. After attempting to enter the Church and the law, he turned to medicine, which he studied at Edinburgh (1752) and Leyden (1754). He returned to England in 1756, after wandering about the Continent. He then became for a time an usher and a literary hack, and for the rest of his life obtained a precarious living

[1] The date on Goldsmith's tomb is incorrect. See *Works*, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (5 vols. 1884–6), I. 3, note 3.

[2] But see Austin Dobson's edition of Goldsmith's *Poems*, World's Classics edition, p. 151, notes.

by his writings; but it must not be forgotten that he enjoyed a distinguished position in the intimate circle of Reynolds, Johnson, and The Club. He died on April 4, 1774.

Poetical Works.—*The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society* (published December 19, 1764; dated 1765); *Edwin and Angelina* (*The Hermit*); printed privately, 1765; afterwards included in *The Vicar of Wakefield*; *Retaliation, a Poem* (1774); *The Haunch of Venison, a Poetical Epistle to Lord Clare* (1776).



Oliver Goldsmith.
(From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

Character.—Goldsmith is one of the most charming figures in literature. Feckless, nervous, sensitive, and affectionate, he had a playful humour and a whimsical self-depreciation which passed Boswell's comprehension. Boswell was also jealous of him, and to find the real Goldsmith we must read between the lines in the *Life of Johnson*. Shy and ungainly, he exposed himself to misapprehensions which must at once have vexed and amused him. At the same time his innocent desire to make a show often led him into blunders more painful to himself than to others. With a little more worldly wisdom he might have been happier and lived longer; but this would not have been the Goldsmith whom Johnson loved and at whose death Burke burst into tears.

In December 1764 appeared Goldsmith's first great poem, *The Traveller*. Opposed as he imagined himself to be to all romantic tendencies in poetry, he nevertheless reveals in this poem, as later in *The Deserted Village*, a touch of the sentimentality which marked the second half of the 18th century. In *The Traveller*, anticipating Byron, he paints himself as a solitary, disillusioned figure, not unlike the *Childe Harold* of a later day:

> But me, not destin'd such delights to share,
> My prime of life in wandering spent and care,
> Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
> Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;

That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.

In this spirit of pensive melancholy *The Traveller* tells of the countries he has visited in a vain search for happiness, only to discover that happiness is not created by externals, but is implanted deep in man's own nature.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind:
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings, or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find.

In 1770 appeared Goldsmith's second great poem, *The Deserted Village*. It was exceedingly popular. In his earlier poem (lines 397–420) the poet had dealt with the sorrows of those forced by careless luxury to seek a relief from poverty by emigration. In *The Deserted Village* Goldsmith elaborates the theme. He sees the village,

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,

not as it really was in its days of prosperity, but transformed by the light of memory into a beauty not its own. The village and its chief characters are described with a sweet simplicity that has made the poem dear to the heart of all who know it. Then the poet turns from this picture of the village in prosperity, and shows it in decay:

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

Goldsmith wrote a number of light society verses, the best known being *Retaliation* (1774) and *The Haunch of Venison* (1776). *Edwin and Angelina* (1765) is an attempt at the ballad style of poetry, which Bishop Percy's *Reliques* of that year was making popular.

Of Goldsmith's songs, the best is the well-known one in *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766):

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

That was the best poem the 18th century could write on faithless love, until Burns took a higher note, and expressed a deeper, more intimate emotion in

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—PRIOR: *The Writings of Matthew Prior* (*Poems on Several Occasions; Dialogues of the Dead*, etc.), ed. A. R. Waller (2 vols., Cambridge, 1905–7).—PARNELL: *Poetical Works*, ed. G. A. Aitken (1894).—GAY: *Poetical Works*, ed. J. Underhill (Muses' Library, 2 vols., 1893); *The Beggar's Opera* (Secker, 1920).—GOLDSMITH: *Complete Poetical Works*, ed. A. Dobson (World's Classics, 1906).

Chapter 4. JOURNALISM AND THE ESSAY

Journalism: Defoe as Publicist—The Periodical Essay: Steele, Addison, Swift; Other contributors, imitators, and successors

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ESSAY

The essay (meaning, in the language of Montaigne, its inventor, an *attempt*[1]) originated as a repository of casual ideas on men and matters. In the hands of Montaigne it was less a literary type than a means of thinking aloud and of communicating his thoughts to his friends. In England it was cultivated by Bacon and by more than a score of other humanists. But as literature became more formalized and academic in the latter half of the 17th century, its practice gradually passed out of fashion, or was lost among memoirs, prefaces, pamphlets, maxims, and characters. As the essay was never effectively revived on the Continent, it was not under normal circumstances likely to be again cultivated in England, especially as Restoration and Georgian literature was so strongly influenced by French or classical models. Nevertheless, a combination of circumstances, peculiar to this country, gave a group of humanists the opportunity of creating it anew. Their work appeared in a detached, fragmentary form, like the essays of Montaigne, Bacon, or Cowley, and so it has always been classified in the same category. But in method and scope it was an achievement of marked originality, and exercised a profound influence on the prose style, and indeed on the civilization of their epoch.

The Early Newspapers.—In origin, the Addisonian essay had little or nothing in common with the Renaissance essay, but belongs to the history of the daily press. Since the beginning of the Civil War England had been the home of corantos, diurnals, and news-sheets. But, thanks to the Licensing Act (passed 1662), the 17th century produced no serious attempt at journalism, except the *London Gazette*, founded (1666) under the immediate control of the Under-secretary of State, with the office of Gazetteer attached as a ministerial appointment. When the Act expired in 1679, a King's Proclamation in 1680 forbade printed matter to be published without licence. In 1685 the Licensing Act was renewed for seven years, but collapsed in 1688. Thus, from the time of William's accession, news-sheets and Mercuries began to multiply. In 1690 John Dunton hit on the ingenious idea of publishing the *Athenian Gazette*, afterwards changed to the *Athenian Mercury*, a periodical to answer questions; in 1702 the *Daily Courant* began its long career till 1735; and on February 17, 1704, a restless genius, a manufacturer of Dutch tiles, who had already attracted attention by his satires and pamphlets, brought out the first

[1] Montaigne, *Essais*, II. 10.

weekly number of *A Review of the Affairs of France and of all Europe, as influenced by that Nation.*

DANIEL DEFOE (1663–1731)

The Man.—This literary adventurer was Daniel Defoe. The son of a London butcher, he began life as a pamphleteer in 1791, and soon showed himself to possess that grasp of details and that intuitive foreknowledge of events out of which great journalists and social writers are made. In 1697 *An Essay upon Projects*, while proposing various social and economic improvements—such as enlarging the Bank of England, paving the highways, instituting friendly societies, reforming the bankruptcy laws, and abolishing press-gangs—had displayed an insight into the manners and morals of his contemporaries, which was soon to prove one of the chief qualifications of the essay writer. Thus Defoe was one of the first to argue, even in that age of wits and scholars, that the "true-hearted merchant" with his knowledge of changing marts and travel is "the most intelligent man in the world." He showed how the habit of begging is formed, how the gambling spirit grows, how the very nature of some institutions encourages swindling and imposture; he explained and illustrated the mental as well as moral weakness of swearing, and pleaded eloquently for the higher education of women and for a more humane treatment of lunatics.

Daniel Defoe.

Defoe's Journals, Pamphlets, etc.—Yet neither in his *Poor Man's Plea* (1698) nor in his *Consolidator* (1705) did he fulfil the promise of *An Essay upon Projects*. He could not keep his attention fixed on the private conduct and pursuits of his neighbours; he was always harking back to politics and public controversy. Besides, though his prose is vigorous, fluent, and homely, he had not cultivated the subtle persuasiveness of style without which the public does not care to read about its own manners and mannerisms. The same is true of his *Review*. This remarkable venture into journalism, which ran with several changes of name, for the most part tri-weekly, from February 1704 to June 1713, is an admirable attempt to estimate the forces of international politics, and to weigh the merits of commercial and ecclesiastical questions at home. But when he turned to the culture and conduct of his age, he

created nothing better than *Mercure Scandale ; or Advice from the Scandalous Club, being a Weekly History of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice, and Debauchery*, a supplement to the *Review* which merely records any private or official act worth exposing to the ridicule of his readers. This periodical is by no means Defoe's only contribution to the progress of social journalism. Some ten years later he was to return to the investigation of city morals and manners, and was then to find highly developed organs of expression and a large and appreciative public of readers (see p. 326). But for the moment the career of a government agent and pamphleteer had too many attractions, especially as the only other kind of periodicals which catered for the polite world were the *Poetical Courant* (1706), which published every Saturday contributions in verse ; *The Diverting Muse* (1707), which undertook to produce a poem on any subject suggested by a correspondent ; *Muses Mercury* (1707), a repository of current verse and of theatrical notices ; *The British Apollo* (1708–11), *or Curious Amusements for the Ingenious ; to which are added the Most Material Occurrences, Foreign and Domestic.*

RICHARD STEELE (1672–1729)

It was at this juncture that a rather irresponsible " man about Town," Richard Steele, who, born in Dublin in 1672, had been a playwright, tractarian, and cavalry officer, plunged into journalism, and developed a new literary type out of the Mercuries, reviews, observators, and gazettes. He was the first venturer to perceive that up till now non-political essays had been addressed to the wrong public. As on the Continent, art and letters were still tempted to draw their inspiration from the court. In France this tendency bore good fruit ; but, with the fall of the Stuart dynasty and with the accession of an alien and unpopular prince, the English monarchy had lost its hold on the nation. At the same time the growth of commerce was giving importance to the middle class, and, by multiplying the comforts of the home, had brought about an age of domesticity. For the brief space of about two generations, conventionality, regularity, and decorum became powerful influences in civilization. They were soon to degenerate into philistinism ; but for the time being they brought culture and humanity into the narrow, unrefined lives of the democracy. Such tendencies, if confined to the parlours and tea-tables of the British citizen, would probably have remained undiscovered by literature, at any rate till the age of Richardson or of Cowper. But by a lucky accident the movement had created for itself a kind of unostentatious publicity in the coffee-houses. Thanks to the Londoner's passion for club life, this new type of tavern had multiplied enormously since the Civil War. Every house had its distinctive *clientèle*, where the frequenters learnt to respect each other's opinions and to tolerate each other's eccentricities, and a humanist who cared to go the round of these institutions could study at will all the shades of London character and sentiment.

The " Tatler " (1709–11).—The man who grasped these possibilities, and opened

the eyes of his fellow-townsmen to the humours of middle-class life, was Richard Steele. Steele had the ordinary equipment of an educated man of the period, but contact with life on all its sides had developed in his susceptible temperament an unfailing insight into artificiality and a generous admiration of worth. He could appreciate the trivial and serious sides of everything in life in their right proportion—that is to say, he had a sense of humour—but there was nothing particularly notable about his intellect. It was not in his ideas that his genius displayed itself, but in his way of expressing them. When the *Tatler* first appeared (April 12, 1709), it was conceived on much the same lines as any previous periodical. A section was devoted to society news and theatrical criticism, another to poetry, another to literature, and yet another to domestic and foreign politics, each under the article of a coffee-house. Miscellaneous notes and discussions were dated "from my own apartment."[1]

New Criticism of Society.—The paper appeared every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday; but after it had run for a few weeks the alleged advices from abroad (under the heading of St. James's Coffee-House) dwindled into mere notices, the theatrical criticisms from White's became perfunctory, while sketches and comments on daily life chiefly "from my own apartment" filled the bulk of each issue. Ever since Tudor times London had been growing fast, and the constant migration to the capital had created a new need—the need of a standard of city manners, of urbanity. Steele used the periodical to supply this want, and gradually evolved a new mouthpiece of public opinion. For a long time he confined himself to destructive criticism. He seems to have been hampered by his training as a playwright, and to have followed Farquhar's advice in the prologue of the *Beaux' Stratagem* to encourage virtue by ridiculing vice. In fact, the success of the *Tatler* marks the decline of the theatre's influence, and paves the way for the development of the novel. As a correspondent[2] writes, "Nobody, I think, before you thought of a way to bring the stage as it were into the coffee-houses, and there attack these gentlemen who thought themselves out of the reach of raillery." So Steele began by satirizing swindlers, sharps, bores, chatterboxes, coxcombs, swearers, and fops. He protested against the impertinences of this newly reconstructed society, such as the way men stared at ladies in the theatre,[3] and wits who, having composed one epigram, were allowed to live on the reputation of it.[4]

Deeper Criticism of Humanity.—But gradually his "lucubrations" began to penetrate more deeply. He was the first English author to discover how far virtue and happiness depend on the intimate relationships of private life and on the interplay of temperament within the family circle. He showed how many domestic and personal considerations ought to carry weight in deciding on a boy's career, and how far the preferences of parents affect the future of their children;[5] or again

[1] See the *Tatler*, No. 1. [2] No. 64. [3] No. 145. [4] No. 84. [5] Nos. 30, 235.

how a father by tact and generosity can cure the vices of his son. This interest in domesticity led him inevitably to the problems of married life, and he characteristically urged that the chief condition of happiness was mutual self-effacement and tolerance in little things.[1] He made a charming study of a girl hesitating in the choice between two husbands,[2] and followed it by a picture of a perfectly harmonious household,[3] and then of another pair whose incompatibility of temperament betrays itself every minute by innuendoes and allusions. Not only was Steele one of the first who thus wrote for women, but he was one of the first who put into prose the new ideal of feminine perfection. In one essay he speaks of the "sweetness of temper and simplicity of manners which are the only lasting charms of woman,"[4] and in another he urges modesty. "It adds charms to their beauty and gives a new softness to the sex. Without it simplicity and innocence appear rude; reading and good sense masculine; wit and humour lascivious."[5] There are moments when he looked below the accomplishments and exigencies of social life, and caught glimpses of the morbid tendencies which the restraints of civilization sometimes aggravate. He made a remarkable study of what is now termed the "inferiority complex" in the person of a gentleman so "far gone in the spleen" that he imagined everybody to be trying to humiliate him.[6] He drew a lively portrait of an "ingenious droll" in whom megalomania took the form of a passion for journalism,[7] and another of a youth harassed with the fear that he was committing the sin of envy against a kinsman. But, as Steele adds with profound insight, to justify these exposures "in the diseases of the mind the person affected is half recovered when he is sensible of the distemper." He had no illusions about the dangers of self-contempt. "It is necessary," he urges, "to an easy and happy life, to possess our minds in such a manner as to be always well satisfied with our own reflections."[8] As was to be expected from a humanist who resisted the influence of politics and fashion as much as he eschewed formal literature and French canons of criticism,[9] the *Tatler* discovered some of the purest gems of human nature hidden in obscure lives. We read of an unassuming old country gentleman whose chief pleasure was to feed the birds in winter and whose chief sorrow was his son's cruelty to animals.[10] Another paper describes the harmless mania of a botanist who is crazy on tulip roots,[11] and yet another (contributed by Addison) details the exquisitely humorous last will and testament of an entomologist who is bequeathing his treasures to legatees not likely to appreciate them.

Method and Style.—A periodical that claimed to be each man's private counsellor, had to discover new ways of insinuating its wisdom. Sometimes he brings the great authorities of antiquity into the daily affairs of 18th-century London. Gyges admonishes Will Glare and his tribe not to seek applause and publicity in all their actions.[12] Pliny and Cicero[13] in their letters teach middle-class women under Queen

[1] No. 79. [2] No. 91. [3] No. 95. [4] No. 61. [5] No. 84. [6] No. 80. [7] No. 101.
[8] No. 251. [9] No. 165. [10] No. 112. [11] No. 218. [12] No. 138. [13] Nos. 149, 159.

Anne how fair a thing is conjugal love. Some old gentlemen who meet in Sheer Lane have to be acquainted with Epictetus to realize that an action must be judged according to the circumstances of the man who performs it.[1] But as the quotation of authorities would not long maintain a hold on so promiscuous a public, wisdom had to be taught in a more intimate and persuasive manner. After the model of *Le Diable Boiteux*, Steele invented Pacolet, a familiar spirit who could lead him unobserved into the privacy of his fellow-citizens; and Addison borrowed the mythus of Plato to teach philosophy in the form of an allegory. But, for the most part, admonitions were put into the mouth of some suitable character. Steele represented himself as a friendly old bachelor with his pipe, his cat, and (as his name Bickerstaff was borrowed from Swift's famous pamphlet) with a taste for astrology, who mixed with all types of people but retained his own detached point of view. To deal with the special affairs of women, he created a half-sister, Jenny Distaff. The absurdities of bibliomania were exposed in the person of Tom Folio; the affectations of the pulpit in the person of Parson Dapper.[2] Some of these and similar efforts are masterpieces of characterization, but others are borrowed straight from the comedy of manners. None of them catch that touch of personality—that art of explaining the world by revealing oneself—which is the secret of the essay. Besides, Steele had not yet displayed the true artist's love for his creations. Except Jenny Distaff, the characters in the *Tatler* are mannikins held up to ridicule for a few minutes and then returned to their box. Although Steele radiated humanity and kindness in all his thoughts, his sympathy and tolerance did not, for the most part, extend to the personages whom he had set himself to satirize. He did not show that nonentities who are ridiculous can also be amiable.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719)

The Man.—If we have to thank Steele for the *Tatler*, which ceased after January 2, 1711, Joseph Addison (who had contributed papers to his friend's journal) was the presiding genius of the *Spectator* (March 1, 1711, to Dec. 6, 1712). Born in Wiltshire, and educated at Charterhouse and Oxford, he was given a pension by King William, which enabled him to travel in France and Italy. His poem, *The Campaign* (1704), written to celebrate the victory of Blenheim, brought him into favour with the Government, and he received several public posts, culminating with a secretaryship of state in 1717. He married the widowed Countess of Warwick in 1716. Steele had succeeded in discovering the range and scope of the periodical essay, but Addison realized its artistic possibilities. He saw that these "lucubrations" should be treated neither as news sheets for polite circles, nor, on the other hand, as detached chapters of a book. They should become a highly specialized type of literature; and he set himself to create both their form and their spirit.

[1] No. 202. [2] No. 66.

The "Spectator" (1711–12).—These single folio sheets became, in his hands, one of the most exacting experiments in literary art. As space is limited, the essayist must confine himself to a single theme. As the reader does not approach so trivial a publication in the receptive mood of a book-reader, the writer must not attempt to introduce him to a new school of thought; he must deal with familiar things. At the same time the essay must have the charm of novelty or be ignored. Addison made full use of the experiments of the *Tatler* in solving these problems. He excluded politics, religious controversy, and pedantry, but he embraced every topic of literary, social, or moral interest. Again, like the *Tatler*, he adapted and applied the wisdom of all epochs and nations to shed light on questions of current interest, and he peopled his pages with types and characters to enliven or illustrate his pronouncements. On the other hand, he dwelt more insistently on the moral purpose of his paper, thus constituting himself the avowed leader of the Puritan reaction from the traditions of the Restoration; and, whereas most numbers of the *Tatler* had proved to be little more than a sheaf of notes and sketches, each issue of the *Spectator* contained a single thought, worked into an exquisite cameo, every creation distinct from its neighbour, though all bearing a strong family likeness. But it is in the tone and attitude of the *Spectator* that its originality and merit will be found. If it staged the familiar scenes of city life, it placed its readers at a different angle; it showed them the world from the viewpoint of the humanist. In the clash of creeds and traditions, literature had lost sight of human nature and recognized only party watchwords and class rivalries. The new periodical shut its eyes to all distinctions except that of vice and virtue, and employed no criterion but that of common sense.

Joseph Addison.
(From a painting by Michael Dahl.)

Dramatis Personæ in the "Spectator."—In the first number the Spectator himself is described. He is a man of learning and experience, but he does not devote his acquirements to the service of any sect or party, and he is absolutely free from prejudice. So far from seeking prominence, he cultivates taciturnity to a fault, and he is so free from pose or bias that he mixes with every form of human activity, but always as an unobserved onlooker. In the second number the reader is introduced to the Spectator's Club—a group of men who represent each a section of the reading public. Again, the student will notice the catholicity of appeal. There is a country squire, a lawyer, a merchant, a soldier, a man of fashion, and a cleric. Such an assemblage of discordant views and conflicting interests would have caused many a "coffee-house scuffle" in real life, especially between Sir Roger and Will Honeycomb. But in the new paper they have a common bond stronger than any class antagonism. They are all failures in life. Except the merchant, whose social status was not assured in the early 18th century, the others have found that they could not gain the world without losing their own souls. Thus having escaped the hardening and narrowing influences of success, their minds are free to look below the surface and to disentangle human worth from its overgrowth of custom, prejudice, and faction. These characters remain mere symbols of the *Spectator's* philosophy or, at the most, mouthpieces to enliven an exchange of opinions, except Sir Roger de Coverley, and Will Honeycomb, who, after fluttering through thirty seasons of London elegance and immorality, marries a dairymaid in the country.[1] The country squire had been the butt of city wits ever since London became the centre of culture, and Addison himself had not forborne, in one of his early contributions to the *Tatler*, to satirize the type as Sir Harry Quickset. But he had since learnt to expect good in the most unpromising material, and he had the wit to see how completely the character of the rural magnate lent itself to an illustration of the gospel of intellectual tolerance. He pictured the knight as old-fashioned, prejudiced, retrograde, rustic, and autocratic; yet discovered in him innumerable traits of benevolence and of kindly simplicity. He portrayed him governing his patriarchal household, or at the assizes, at the theatre, among gipsies and among the Thames boatmen—in all places where his characteristics would tell against him—and on each occasion he made his hero triumph through his artless and lovable personality.

The Transition to the Novel.—The Coverley papers are among the most felicitous creations of English literature, and, if Addison had lived at the end of the 18th century instead of at its beginning, he would undoubtedly have become a great novelist. But Puritans had still too low an opinion of fiction, and the *beau monde* had still too high an opinion of the theatre, to regard story-telling for its own sake as anything but a trivial diversion, and Addison had more serious tasks to perform.

Addison's Influence.—He taught his age restraint, good manners, good sense, forbearance, and mutual esteem. Some of the most valuable papers for his contem-

[1] No. 530.

poraries were those which showed the middle class how to think. He pointed out that the drama was decaying under the influence of French scenery and stage effects. He distinguished between true wit, which deals with ideas, and false wit, which plays only with words. He recalled literary men to the spirit and simplicity of old ballads, and social thinkers to the rising importance of commerce. He taught a more humane and sympathetic religion than former generations had cultivated.[1] He encouraged and guided self-culture by contending that English readers could find in *Paradise Lost* as high a standard of excellence as was consecrated by the *Iliad* and the *Æneid;* and that the enjoyment of landscapes, art, and literary imagery cultivated the mind.

Addison's Satire.—Unlike Dryden, Pope, and the *Tatler* in its earlier numbers, he never satirized persons, but he ridiculed customs and prejudices with exquisite banter. His method was to collect as many examples as possible of some prevailing absurdity, gravely crowd them all into some anecdote or illustration, and then leave the reader to laugh at the incongruous result. In this way he ridiculed the staging of the opera [2] and the monstrosities painted on sign-posts,[2] head-dresses which make the wearers hideous,[3] hoop-petticoats which distort the figure [4] and riding-dresses which make the wearer look like a man.[5] While on the subject of women's affectations, he ridiculed those who collect books for show,[6] who are Gallophile to the pitch of absurdity,[7] who exact worship from men which ought to be reserved for the Deity and so constitute themselves "idols," [8] who express their political opinions by the position of a beauty spot or by the colour of their head-dress.[9] He was just as humorously critical of men who fill their letters with French military terms,[10] who caricature their own faces in grinning matches,[11] who make a living by breaking records for sleeping [12] or by seeking a profitable marriage,[13] or do so little that a diary of their daily activities would contain only entries of eating, drinking, and sleeping.[14] The free and easy manners of theatre audiences, which allowed the trunk-maker [15] to hammer his applause on the wainscot, and even permitted a play to be rendered inaudible by a concert of cat-calls,[16] are treated to a mock-serious investigation full of irony and of good-humoured contempt. Perhaps his most brilliant paper is on a beau's head [17] which is so exclusively occupied with fashionable frivolities that, on dissection, the tissues appear to be composed of microscopic ribbons, embroidery, billets-doux, snuff, protestations, and sonnets. Never has more wit and accurate knowledge with less venom been employed on the censure of folly.

Style and Method of Addison.—Addison admitted that there were some of his daily papers "composed with regularity and method, and others that run out into the wildness of those compositions which go by the name of essays." [18] Though the former type have lost much of their freshness by the lapse of two centuries, it is still

[1] *e.g.* Nos. 381, 483, 495. [2] Nos. 5, 13, 18, 29, 31. [3] No. 98. [4] No. 127. [5] No. 435. [6] No. 2. [7] No. 45. [8] No. 73. [9] No. 265. [10] No. 165. [11] Nos. 173, 183. [12] No. 184. [13] No. 311. [14] No. 317. [15] No. 235. [16] No. 361. [17] No. 275. [18] No. 476.

easy to see how, in the words of an admirer,[1] they "insensibly lead the reader to that sweetness of temper which you so well describe." But the so-called essays have gained in charm, and many of them contain curious studies in human nature, such as the most subtle modern *raconteurs* have hardly surpassed. We are introduced to the urban recluse whose mind and body are adapted to an eremite's existence in the streets and coffee-houses of London. "I am one of those who live in Taverns to a great age, by a sort of regular intemperance; I never go to bed drunk but always flustered; I wear away very gently; am apt to be peevish but never angry."[2] In another paper we read of the Everlasting Club, whose members divide the twenty-four hours of the day and night between them in such a manner that an incomer will always find the table furnished with good cheer and good company, and the steward in the great elbow chair at the upper end.[3] There is the curious evolution of the younger brother to a baronet, Will Wimble, who has grown old without disillusionment in the sporting pastimes of the country, and has lost every other faculty but that of pleasing his fellows.[4] Then we meet the uxorious husband, misnamed "hen-pecked," who submits to a tyranny of tears rather than face an explanation with an over-effusive and neurotic wife;[5] or the bankrupt rake who, realizing that a name for poverty was fatal, changed his clothes, his character, and his address, and with £50 in his pocket built up a reputation for secret wealth and lived on his dupes.[6] Amongst others, there is the portrait of the virtuous housewife, who has lost her sense of proportion, and is so intent on her domestic accomplishments that she neglects her family and nearly ruins her husband in order to become an ornament to her sex.[7]

Style and Method of Steele.—Some of these and similar studies are by Steele, who did not in other respects tread in Addison's footsteps. Steele had not the same gift of drawing a moral, nor such a fund of scholarly knowledge to devote to current topics, nor an equal charm of whimsical yet polished style. On the other hand, he had the playwright's eye for situations and for the interplay of characters. He had by nature a surer gift of reading the human heart, and by experience a keener insight into the ways of the town and into the latent vices which city life develops. He saw how vanity and self-consciousness produced much of the love-making in London with its "jilts"[8] and "fribblers,"[9] and ignorance and selfishness most of the disillusionments and humiliations of married life.[10] He went deeper when he discussed education, and pointed out how frequently the school system of that age sacrificed the character and temperament of children to their mental training. He suggested that flogging, which broke the spirit of some boys, rendered others, by reaction, pert and insolent, but he insists that the true place where young people are made or marred is the home.[11] A humanist who had so much sympathy with the feelings of children was not likely to overlook the annoyances of their elders. He

[1] No. 134. [2] No. 24. [3] No. 72. [4] No. 108. [5] No. 176. [6] No. 264. [7] No. 328.
[8] No. 187. [9] No. 288. [10] Nos. 80, 149, 212, 216, 252, 254, 295, 298, 402, 479, 522.
[11] Nos. 66, 157, 168, 193, 230, 263, 330, 364, 431, 496.

showed how much friction and genuine discomfort are caused by tactless, overbearing, or obscene talkers, and how a well-bred conversationalist can give genuine pleasure by consideration for his hearer's susceptibilities.[1] And while advocating a fellow-feeling between all classes and both sexes, he did not forget to heap scorn on the vileness and futility of the courtship of patrons.[2] In this way he gave the middle class their standard of good manners. He was far from blind to the darker vices of city life. He knew the danger of false ideals, and declared that some youths plunged into vice simply to recommend themselves as "men of spirit," or because it was expected of the "men of wit and pleasure about the town."[3] He argued, again, that others who have not the talents to excel among men can cultivate a veneer of polish and amiability which ingratiates them with women,[4] and in a paper of almost matchless irony he exposed the hypocrite who masks his debauchery with an affectation of refinement.[5] If Steele was so little impressed by the superficial brilliance of the upper classes, he had abundant sympathy for the underworld, which ministers to this glitter. He reminded his readers that servants have the same talents, not to mention susceptibilities, as their employers, and yet never have a fair chance in life. It was the curse of dependency that the underling must be an accomplice to his master's vices as well as the victim of his ill-nature, and was expected, merely for wages, to exercise self-control more effectively than a man of breeding and education.[6] Steele had censure for those who were heartless and interested, such as scandalmongers,[7] matchmakers,[8] and quacks,[9] but he was no satirist by inclination.

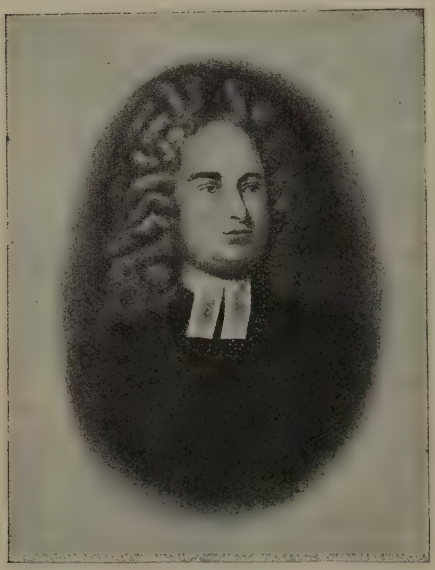
Imitators and Rivals.—Both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* provoked many rivals and enemies.[10] *Female Tatler* appeared on July 8, 1709, and ran for over a hundred numbers. *Titt for Tatt*, published under the name of "Jo: Partridge Esq.," began on March 2, 1709, but ceased after five numbers. *Whisperer* and *Gazette-à-la-Mode* both appeared in 1709, but were withdrawn almost immediately. *Tory Tatler*, *Northern Tatler*, *Tattling Harlot*, *Serious Thoughts*, *Visions of Sir Heister Ryley*, all appeared in 1710. *Silent Monitor*, *Growler*, and the *Tatler by Donald MacStaff of the North* (published in Edinburgh) were launched in 1711. There were three attempts at continuing the paper under the same name immediately after Steele had laid down the pen; but all failed, including William Harrison's effort, which Swift supported. The *Spectator* was accompanied by many unsuccessful rivals. The *Miscellany*, *Surprize*, *Hermit*, *Inquisitor*, *Pilgrim*, *Restorer*, *Free Thinker*, appeared in 1711; *Historian*, *Rhapsody*, *Plain Dealer*, *Useful Intelligence*, *Medley*, *Rambler*, in 1712. Some of these periodicals came into the world still-born, and none of them survived St. John's Stamp Act, which imposed a tax of ½d. on each half-sheet. "The *Observator* is fallen; the *Medleys* are jumbled together with the *Flying Post*;

[1] Nos. 132, 138, 145, 155, 242, 422, 504.
[2] Nos. 193, 214, 480.
[3] Nos. 154, 151.
[4] No. 156.
[5] No. 276.
[6] Nos. 88, 96, 137, 202.
[7] No. 390.
[8] No. 437.
[9] No. 444.
[10] See *Spectator*, No. 229.

the *Examiner* is deadly sick,"[1] but the *Spectator* doubled its price and continued to maintain its hold on the town.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

Life.—Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, and his first post was that of confidential secretary to Sir William Temple. Having taken orders, he was made a prebendary in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, of which later he was made dean, as a reward for transferring his allegiance to the Tory party. In 1736 his mind gave way, and his last five years were dark and miserable. The affection of his life was for Esther Johnson, whom he first met at Sir William Temple's house, and for whom he wrote the *Journal to Stella*. (For other works, see pp. 330, 337–8.)



Jonathan Swift.

Swift as Journalist.—Of the papers that were hard hit by the new journalism, the most important was the *Examiner*. Swift, on his first visit to London (1707–9), found that he had much in common with both Steele and Addison, and with something of their spirit but with more power he attacked the impostures of prognosticators in the person of John Partridge. His immortal pamphlet, *Predictions for the Year 1708*, made famous the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, which Steele was glad to adopt in the *Tatler*, as a symbol of good sense and sincerity. Swift made several suggestions for the *Tatler*, and contributed at least five papers; but by the time he had returned to London (1710) his mood had already become too saturnine and savage for the witty and humane creation of his two friends. Two of his papers—No. 5, which is perfectly odious, and No. 20, which is malignant—were omitted by Steele in his final edition, though they are both masterpieces of prose. Swift's almost inhuman indictment of life could find expression only in books and pamphlets which compromise nobody but the author. As a journalist the only safe field for him was politics. When the Whig Ministry fell in 1710, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and Prior had started the *Examiner* as the organ of the new Ministry. Swift undertook the work from the thirteenth number to the forty-eighth or fiftieth. His task was to support the Tories and defend the court revolution which had displaced Godolphin and had raised

[1] Swift to Esther Johnson, August 6, 1712.

the Earl of Oxford to power. In those censorious days no cynic or pessimist could be too bitter for party strife. Yet Swift is, considering the occasion, surprisingly moderate. He avoids personalities to a more than usual degree, and discusses policies, crises, and situations in dignified and powerful rhetoric, frequently coloured by irony. He had completely mastered the arguments for his side, and gives the impression of a controversialist convinced of the high moral purpose of his cause. His influence was enormous, and his papers form one of the few examples of leader-writing that has become literature.

THE "GUARDIAN" (1713)

When the *Spectator* ceased on December 6, 1712, Steele and Addison, though both deeply implicated in politics, had other work to do. Both busied themselves with the stage, but neither could throw off the habit of social journalism. On March 12, 1713, Steele brought out the first number of the *Guardian*, which appeared daily till 1st October. As the new paper, like the *Spectator*, was to deal with society, the editor felt the same need of letting his readers peep into the privacies of life and character. Detached portraits run the risk of remaining strangers. If Steele was to persuade his public, he must create in them the insight and understanding which come from familiarity. So he opened his serial with a group of persons who were intended to enlist his readers' sympathy as well as to illustrate their conduct. But as Steele's design was "no less than to make the pulpit, the bar, and the stage all act in concert in the care of piety, justice and virtue," he was no longer content with a coffee-house club. His setting was this time to be the home. So he called into existence the Lizards, a county family composed of a widow, still at the dangerous age, four sons, five daughters, and himself, Mr. Nestor Ironside, their guardian, to watch over their education and to launch them into life. Domestic influence was a favourite theme of Steele's, but he soon lost sight of this topic, and, besides, his tone had become too didactic, not to say homiletic, for the graces of polite journalism. Except for one paper on the art of conversation,[1] and for another to explain the secret of story-telling,[2] there is little in his first forty-three essays to recall the brilliant co-editor of the *Spectator*. But on the 2nd June Addison joined the staff, and Steele began to improve. He protested against the way coffee-house orators, in their excitement, buttonholed their interlocutors till it became necessary to have a reserve of buttons to replace those lost in debate.[3] He gave a delightful picture of a footman making love to a housemaid while they cleaned the opposite sides of a window.[4] He warned enthusiasts against the career of a literary wit in a fable told in his best manner.[5] He ridiculed braggarts with their objectionably long swords in his pictures of the Terrible Club,[6] and he recovered his old lightness of touch in sketching a young rake's frivolities[7] and the gay vanities of Bath visitors.[8]

[1] No. 24. [2] No. 42. [3] No. 84. [4] No. 87.
[5] No. 141. [6] No. 143. [7] No. 151. [8] No. 174.

Among Steele's contributions the reader will find Sir Edward Sackville's unforgettable account of his duel with Lord Bruce.[1] Addison's contributions have all their author's style and air of distinction, but are not otherwise remarkable for a reader familiar with the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*.

New Contributors.—The chief interest of the *Guardian* will be found in the new blood which it attracted to the art of essay-writing. Any work of genius has a vitality peculiar to itself; it multiplies its own life among its contemporaries. But in that age of formal literature the periodical essay exercised an unexpected influence, because it had learned to conceal its art. Almost every writer of note was allured by a form of composition which appeared to demand only facility and candour. Addison claimed that " my paper among the republic of letters is the Ulysses's bow, in which every man of wit or learning may try his strength."[2] But very few contributors survived the test, for this very reason—that they were put off their guard by the apparent informality of the work. An art which betrays a writer into self-revelation requires from him a certain temperament. Because it enters so many houses and coffee-houses and comes there so frequently, it must have something common to all its readers. It must be tolerant, universal, reactionary; it must be free from anything sectarian, polemic, or controversial. Hence some of the talents which produced brilliant pamphlets spelt sheer disqualification for essay-writing. We have seen how the future author of *Genteel and Ingenious Conversation* and of *Directions to Servants* failed to adapt himself to the spirit of the *Tatler*. In the same way, when Pope began to contribute to the *Guardian*, he found that his quarrel with the human race was irreconcilable. His subtle wit and his graceful colloquial style are undeniable, but his thoughts are charged with venom. Budgell, Birch, Hughes, Parnell, Wotton, Gay, Tickell, and Eusden wrote occasionally, without achieving anything remarkable, but George Berkeley's contributions are most significant.

GEORGE BERKELEY (1685–1753)

Berkeley, already the author of *A New Theory of Vision* (1709) and of *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), had come to town in January 1713 with the manuscript of *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, ready for publication. Although so deeply committed to philosophical research, he too came under the spell of the essay, and in twelve papers taught his age how to combat Atheism in popular literature.

Berkeley's Style.—He realized that the agnostic of that age was not so much a moral rebel as an incomplete thinker—one who needed to be enlightened rather than converted or condemned; so he set himself to put philosophy and metaphysics (as then understood) within the reach of the average layman. He exposed what he

[1] No. 133. [2] No. 98.

claimed to be the fallacy of believing that the soul depended on the senses and faculties for its existence.[1] He showed how often a man's view of life becomes hard and materialistic, because he is blind to its true pleasures.[2] With the nicest touch of wit he described a visit to St. Paul's, and symbolized the freethinker as a fly on one of the pillars, who can detect the inequalities in a piece of stone, but has not the slightest idea of the symmetry or usefulness of the building.[3] With admirable justness he showed how erudition, whether derived from Plato[4] or from astronomy,[5] conduces to religion, unless the scholar loses sight of the true object of study and acquires knowledge as the miser hoards gold.[6] In his lighter vein, he represented himself as enabled to see into the pineal gland (then believed to be the seat of the soul), and while studying that of a freethinker he saw vanity head an army of passions and of obsolete notions to attack what looked like a formidable castle, but which, when cleared of the mists of prejudice, turned out to be nothing more harmful than a church.[7]

DECLINE OF THE ESSAY

In spite of many excellent papers, the *Guardian* marks the decline of the essay. From Montaigne to Lamb, this literary type has always flourished in a reactionary atmosphere. It is the most effective form of expression for men who move with the times but shrink from going the full length. As they fall just below the rather troubled surface of current thought, they abandon the enthusiasms of the moment and return to more permanent interests. Since they are not committed to a cause, their genre must be free from the restraints and pretensions of formal literature. So the essay came into existence, and has charmed readers in proportion as it weighed the values of daily life, undisturbed by prejudice, pedantry, or party pose.

The "Englishman" (1713–15).—But, unhappily, neither Steele nor Addison could any longer resist the compelling force of faction. The *Guardian*, being a Whig paper, had already broken peace with the *Examiner*;[8] and Steele, now member for Stockbridge, suddenly discontinued his paper on October 2, 1713, and on the 6th brought out the first number of *The Englishman, being the Sequel of the Guardian.* Whether or not, as Pope alleges, Steele had quarrelled with Tonson his publisher, there can be no doubt that the main motive in changing the name of the periodical was to change its purpose.

Politics in the Periodical.—The new paper appeared thrice a week for fifty-seven numbers, and is almost entirely political. Except for a notice of Alexander Selkirk,[9] for a description of the pleasures of country drives,[10] and the account of a visit to Oxford, the *Englishman* is concerned with answering the *Examiner* and with articles on passive obedience, on the Protestant succession, or on the constitution of England.

[1] *Guardian*, No. 27. [2] No. 49. [3] No. 70. [4] No. 27. [5] No. 70.
[6] No. 77. [7] No. 39. [8] *Guardian*, Nos. 41, 53. [9] No. 26. [10] No. 21.

It was a time of breathless excitement in the political world. The Tories had for years been plotting for the restoration of the Stuarts, while the Whigs were working for the Hanoverian succession. The queen's failing health had now brought this question to the brink of civil war, and no public-spirited citizen could shut his eyes to the issues. On August 1, 1714, George I. became king without bloodshed, and the Tory party practically disappeared; but London never returned to its old ways. The fall of Marlborough in 1712, and the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, had marked the transference of political power from the aristocracy to the House of Commons; the establishment of a foreign dynasty nullified the influence of the crown for more than half a century; and politics henceforth occupied the minds, if they did not engage the energies, of all thinking men. In such an atmosphere polite journalism could not thrive. Addison, who as far back as 1710 had defended the Whigs against Swift in the Whig *Examiner*, revived the *Spectator* on June 18, 1714, and produced seventy-nine essays almost single-handed; but next year he returned to party journalism. The *Freeholder*, which he brought out on December 23, 1715, twice weekly for six months, has all Addison's delicacy of thought and style. Besides many appeals to the fair sex, there is the famous study of the Tory fox-hunter whose political prejudices are first exposed and then confuted with as much kindliness and graphic humour as are the foibles of Sir Roger. But the paper is avowedly the organ of the Hanoverian dynasty, and most of its numbers deal with questions of policy and of constitution. Steele entered upon another phase of his political career. On July 11, 1715, he commenced twice weekly a new series of the *Englishman*, intended to confirm the accusations which he had levelled against the Tories in the former series. In December of the same year he started *Town Talk*, a weekly, which for nine numbers dealt largely with the theatre. In 1718 we find the two former collaborators attacking one another over Sunderland's Peerage Bill—Steele in four weekly pamphlets called the *Plebeian*, and Addison in two called the *Old Whig*.

Defoe's Social and Political Periodicals. — Addison died in 1719. Steele appeared once more as a journalist in January 1720, when he brought out the *Theatre* twice weekly until 5th April. The paper was described by Thomas Rundle[1] as being "written in the spirit of the *Tatlers*," but though it discusses many topics, they are of ephemeral interest, and the main purpose of the periodical was to vindicate the managers of Drury Lane Theatre, who had been deprived of their licence. Steele retired from active life in 1723, but it is significant that nearly all his and Addison's old allies continued to devote their pens to politics. Soon after Nicholas Amhurst started the *Craftsman* in 1726, to harry the Walpole Ministry, we find Swift, Gay, Pope, and Budgell among the contributors, now joined by Bolingbroke, Pulteney, Arbuthnot, Lyttelton, and Akenside. But the only writer whose gifts seemed really adapted to the new requirements of journalism was Defoe. Since editing the *Review*,

[1] Letter to Mrs. B. Sandys, 24th March.

all his time had been taken up with political intrigues and jobbery, and it was not till he had lost nearly all credit with both parties that he returned to literature as the only means of earning a living and of influencing his age. From 1716 to 1726 he published hundreds of essays in *Mercurius Politicus*, which he founded; in *Mist's Journal*, a Jacobite organ of which he was redactor; and in the *Whitehall Evening Post, Daily Post, Applebee's Journal, Universal Spectator*, and *Fog's Journal*. In these papers he did not only discuss events: he had an eye to their influence on conduct. From September 1719 to May 1722 he recorded the extravagances, the follies, the intrigues, and the suicides which attended the South Sea Bubble. He discussed the riots of the calico-makers' strike in 1719; he championed the starving hay-makers in 1722; and he supported the Government's efforts to guard against a recurrence of the Plague. Like so many subsequent journalists, he tended to cast his thoughts into the most paradoxical and attractive form, sometimes beginning his discussion with some startling announcement which was bound to rivet the reader's attention, or sustaining both sides of a controversy in successive numbers of a paper, or damning some abuse with ironical praise. He seems to have formed an ideal of a middle-class society founded on trade, credit, and efficient administration.

Anticipations of his Novels.—But though he had sufficient insight into his age to insist on democratic institutions and on commercial honesty, his heart was not really in them. He had suffered too much to catch the true spirit of the times. His sympathy was with the outcasts and the failures. The fugitive glimpses which he gives us of the careers of persecuted prostitutes and of the exploits of highwaymen and of robbers, especially of Cartouche and of Jack Sheppard, may have been inspired by a love of sensationalism. But some of his papers display remarkable insight into human nature exposed to the rough edges of life. One of his best essays is against flogging in the army;[1] another deals with the return to England of transported felons;[2] and yet another, perhaps his most penetrating piece of detached writing, discusses death and a future state.[3] Defoe contributed to one periodical a very celebrated series, which proved that one province of 18th-century journalism was soon to be usurped by the novel: *Robinson Crusoe* first saw the light in the *London Post*,[4] a newspaper founded by Harris in 1715.

End of the 18th-century Periodical.—Meanwhile the tone and spirit of contemporary thought was so changed that when a revival of literary journalism was attempted, nothing better was produced than the *Grub Street Journal*, a weekly apparently inspired by the *Dunciad*, which ran from 1731 to 1737 and made excellent copy out of the follies and ineptitudes of hack writers. Periodicals were at last finding their proper scope in the realm of controversy and of politics. On the one hand, Warburton used the *Republic of Letters* to defend Pope against Crousaz's attacks on the *Essay on Man*;

[1] *Applebee's Journal*, September 15, 1722.
[2] *Ibid.*, December 22, 1722.
[3] *Ibid.*, May 23 and September 25, 1724.
[4] Nos. 125–289.

while in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, founded in 1731, George Cave gave extracts from all other news-sheets and professed to report the debates in the House. Great writers, including Johnson and Goldsmith, were still from time to time attracted to the periodical essay by its directness of appeal or quickness of remuneration, but journalism had definitely started on a divergent course.

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Chapter 5. SATIRE

Pope: *The Dunciad; Satires and Epistles;* his *Essays* in part satirical—Swift—Samuel Johnson: *London; The Vanity of Human Wishes*—Churchill: *The Rosciad; The Prophecy of Famine; Epistle to Hogarth; The Candidate*—The *Letters of Junius*

POPE AS A SATIRIST.—The essence of satire is the power to mix jest and earnest. Its writers fall into two classes. Of the one are those who, like Horace, have themselves often in view and whose style but rarely savours of rhetoric or poetry. The other class, of which Juvenal is the type, deals less directly with the personality of the writer, bases its style upon poetry, and finds in rhetoric the enforcement of its themes. It is not chance that made Pope imitate Horace and Johnson imitate Juvenal. Pope's adaptation of Horace enabled him to defend himself and assail his enemies. A difference of temperament causes in him a venom from which his original as a sociable man of the world had wholly cleared himself, but the literary vehicle could easily be turned to carry venom, and the more so when the *enjambements* gave way to the stinging crispness of the couplet. The style of Juvenal follows the epic flow of Virgil. The semblance of dignity thus acquired fits with a more sombre, if less spiteful, view of life. The sinner is less prominent than the sin. Suffering, whether deserved or undeserved, is presented as the result of errors in heart or head lying so deep in human nature that those who display them are not fully conscious of their wrongdoing. It is want of thought and feeling that leaves the industrious scholar and man of letters to suffer from

Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.

Works.—The *Dunciad* is a ferocious attack upon numerous small personages who had provoked Pope's anger. In its first form the hero was Lewis Theobald, the first great textual critic of Shakespeare. Afterwards Colley Cibber, a skilful actor and capable dramatist, took Theobald's place. Throughout the work is little more than a skilful lampoon. The remaining satires are mostly imitations of Horace. The prologue is an apology for satire, with incidental attacks upon Addison, Halifax, Hervey, and others. A philosophy of life is the staple of the four first satires, crossed with many personal attacks and much skilful but malicious drawing of character. The fifth turned Horace's encomium on Augustus into a satire on George II., and develops, after Horace, into a defence of literature.

Characteristics.—Pope is a master of literary craft. Confining himself almost entirely to the heroic couplet, he gave it a condensation and finish unknown to his predecessors. His epigrammatic lines are unrivalled in their picture of contemporary social life from the satirist's point of view. For his venom there is some excuse; his life,

as he says, was a "long disease." Moreover, he was attached to a small political circle whose opposition to Walpole—the "fixed star," as even the Tory Johnson admitted him to be—degenerated into the merest faction. Pope had neither the political insight to see the merits of Walpole's administration nor to realize that the men whose friendships he valued were destitute of public virtue. Skilful as he was in hitting the weak points of his enemies, his portraits would have been more effective satire if he had made virtue a foil to vice. Dryden's assault on Shaftesbury the politician gained splendour by his encomium of Shaftesbury the judge, but only in the case of Addison does Pope remember this touch of art.

SWIFT AS A SATIRIST.—Swift was one of the greatest masters of prose satire, and the note of irony, sometimes grave, sometimes bitter, is predominant in almost everything he wrote. In professing to plead an opponent's cause he shatters it. We see this quality in his pamphlets and articles, in the *Drapier's Letters* (1724), in the *Modest Proposal* (1729), in which he proposed to relieve the misery of the Irish by using their children for food. Most of all we see it in *Gulliver's Travels* (see p. 338). His style is perfectly adapted for this purpose in its austere simplicity and bold masculine vigour. To no other English writer, perhaps, was the English tongue so much a weapon of deadly precision.

JOHNSON'S SATIRES.—Johnson's *London* has hardly enough sincerity to take first rank. He denounces the town, but despite its neglect of him he loved it well. He follows Juvenal's third satire, but his parallels are sometimes unreal.

> I cannot bear a French metropolis (98),

he cries, but the French adventurer by no means pervaded London as the Greekling had pervaded Rome. A nobleman whose London house was burnt found no "pension'd band" to

> Refund the plunder of the beggar'd land (197).

Nevertheless some of the parallels are excellent, the verse is always vigorous, and the bitterness natural to a man conscious of great powers and like to die of hunger.

In the next four years Johnson learnt much, and in *The Vanity of Human Wishes* there is no trace of immaturity. The satire supplies an almost unique example of a copy surpassing the original. Juvenal's powerful rhetoric has in it a characteristic note of baseness which is at least modified in the English version. And in the fine conclusion Johnson shows a Christian serenity after which he strove, but did not always attain—very different from the stoicism of the Roman.

CHARLES CHURCHILL (1731–64).—Churchill matriculated at St. John's College, Cambridge, from Westminster, in 1748, but probably did not reside, having about that time made a Fleet marriage below his rank. He then took orders, and was for some time a curate. The publication of *The Rosciad* brought him fame, and

he gave himself up to authorship, became a friend of Wilkes, and wrote in the *North Briton*. His first work ran through nine editions in four years, but the others were less successful. He died at Boulogne, whither he had gone to meet Wilkes.

Works.—*The Rosciad* (1761); *The Apology* (1761); *Night* (1762); *The Ghost* (1762 and 1763); *The Prophecy of Famine* (1763); *An Epistle to W. Hogarth* (1763); *The Conference* (1763); *The Duellist* (1763); *The Author* (1763); *Gotham* (1764); *The Candidate* (1764); *The Times* (1764); *Independence* (1764); *The Farewell* (1764).

Character.—A strain of recklessness shortened the lives of Churchill and his great friends Robert Lloyd and Bonnell Thornton. Against this defect must be set a capacity for friendship and a strong vein of generosity. Cowper calls him surly, and his early poverty made him bitter. Nevertheless he could enjoy life though he could not husband it. He died so young that we cannot say how these qualities would have developed in maturer years. He did not think deeply on life, had no scheme for it, and satirized a world of which he had but a superficial knowledge.

Style.—*The Rosciad*, by which Churchill made his name, remains his best work. It attacks the mannerisms and weaknesses of contemporary players, reserving praise for some actresses and for Garrick. Churchill wrote largely in Wilkes's newspaper, and in *The Prophecy of Famine*, *The Duellist*, and *The Candidate* wrote with ferocious satire of Bute and his countrymen and of Sandwich, Warburton, and Mansfield, Wilkes's leading enemies. The *Epistle to William Hogarth*, an answer to the artist's portrait of Wilkes, is more effective, because, while denouncing Hogarth's heartlessness, it admits his skill as a draughtsman. Johnson contemned Churchill's works, and the knowledge of this contempt made Churchill take advantage of Johnson's connection with the Cock Lane ghost to attack him in *The Ghost* under the name of "Pomposo."

Gotham, the one work that is not satirical, was inspired by Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*, and is unintelligibly at variance with the Whiggism which elsewhere characterizes the author. In fact, Churchill had not really thought upon politics, and had neither knowledge nor judgment to perceive his inconsistency.

The remaining works are general satires or defences of the satirist's craft. Like most of the poems, they have many echoes of Dryden and Pope, but fall almost as short of the vigour of the one as of the polish of the other.

SIR PHILIP FRANCIS (1740–1808).—The authorship of the *Letters of Junius* was never expressly claimed, but external evidence points to Francis and internal evidence is almost conclusive. If Francis and Junius were two men, the one was morally and intellectually the double of the other.

Life.—After being captain of St. Paul's School, Francis entered the Civil Service at the age of sixteen, and in 1762 became first secretary in the War Office. He was

at the same time active in anonymous journalism. In old age he said that he "scarcely remembered when he did not write." In 1768 he first used the signature of "Junius," the allusion being to Brutus the tyrannicide. His letters under this and other signatures appeared in the *Public Advertiser* from January 1769 to January 1772. Next year he was appointed a member of the new Indian Council. Arriving at Calcutta in October 1774, he actively opposed Warren Hastings, the governor-general. After making a fortune, he returned to England in 1780, and, being elected to the House of Commons in 1784, supported the impeachment of Hastings. His later career is remarkable only for his attempts to save Burke from his frenzied view of the French Revolution.

Works.—Apart from the letters under different signatures claimed by Junius, many letters in the newspapers have been on more or less cogent grounds assigned to Francis. Some letters of considerable importance are published in Burke's correspondence.

Character.—Francis was a man of great industry and considerable courage. His rancour was excessive, but, though sometimes springing from personal motives, it was more often the result of his political beliefs. His arrogance was innate, and he cultivated scorn as a fine art. His ambition was great and was never satisfied. His interests lay wholly in politics. He has been called a doctrinaire Whig, but he was rather a strict adherent of principles as superior to precedents. "No precedents," he wrote, "will support either natural injustice or violation of positive right." He was fiercely opposed to the attempt of George III. to turn a reign into a rule, and saw clearly the "state of abandoned servility and prostitution to which the undue influence of the crown has reduced the other branches of the legislature." Hence he attacks Grafton, Bedford, and others no less for their neglect of principle than for their political incapacity.

Style.—Writing as Philo-Junius, the author says that "it does not appear that Junius values himself upon any superior skill in composition." This was of course an affectation, since the polished, if occasionally pompous, periods are the result of much care and long practice. For an easier and more familiar style he had some contempt. "I wish," wrote Francis to Burke in 1790, "you would let me teach you to write English," and he added that "polish is natural in peroration." After dealing with the facts, Junius showed power in summing up. "You are at liberty to choose between the hypocrite and the coward. Your best friends are in doubt which way they shall incline. Your country unites the characters and gives you credit for them both."[1] But the powers to which Junius was opposed were too strong to be overcome by railing, and Lord North's Ministry maintained all the evils against which the letters were directed.

[1] To the Duke of Grafton, February 14, 1770.

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Chapter 6. THE RISE OF THE MODERN NOVEL

The Antecedents—The decline of Romance, the establishment of Realism—Defoe—Swift—Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*—Fielding's Novels—Smollett and Sterne

THE ANTECEDENTS

The Decline of Romance.—In the pamphlet-novels of Greene, Nash, and Dekker we saw a kind of realism grafted on to either the old romantic stock or a nondescript sort of essay or moral discourse. Pure romance, meanwhile, had not entirely ceased; it was in fact an unconscionably long time a-dying. A niece of Sidney, the Lady Mary Wroth, imitated the *Arcadia*, with remarkable absence of originality, in *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania* (1621); and other imitations appeared, besides the sugary pastorals of Lodge, Greene, and Breton. In the middle of the 17th century a revival took place through the craze for the long-winded romances emanating from France, which owed their paternity to Portuguese or Spanish models—the pastorals to Montemayor's *Diana Innamorada*, the heroic romances to *Amadis de Gaula*. At the time when the stilted heroics of Davenant and Chamberlayne's poetry were applauded, these elephantine tomes were being industriously turned into English by printers' hacks and genteel amateurs.

Translations of French Romances.—D'Urfé's sentimental pastoral *Astrée* was translated into three volumes folio by "a person of quality" (1657–8). Gombreville's heroical *History of Polexandre* (1647), the *Ariana* of Desmaretz (1636), La Calprenède's historico-heroical novels of gallantry, *Cassandra, the fam'd Romance* (1676), *Hymen's Præludia* (1652), and *Pharamond* (1677), were also given in portly folios to an eager world. Most prized of all, and absorbed most conscientiously by feminine readers, were the translations from Madeleine de Scudéry. *Artamenes, or the Grand Cyrus*, appeared in five volumes (1653–5), *Cleila*, also in five (1654–60), *Ibrahim, or the Illustrious Bassa* (1652), *Almahide* (1672), *Amaryllis to Tityrus* (1681), and *Zelinda* (1676). Dryden, Settle, Banks, and others borrowed plots from the Scudéry romances, and Mrs. Behn and Nat Lee from those of La Calprenède.

Imitations.—Nor were these exotic creations without imitators. The most distinguished were those illustrious dilettanti Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery, and the Scottish lawyer Sir George Mackenzie. Boyle's romance of a spurious antiquity, *Parthenissa* (1654), outdid his rivals in length, extravagance, and bombastic gravity. Mackenzie's *Aretina* (1661) has some originality and not a little beauty, in spite of its high-flown style and the grotesque conceits mixed with its paradoxes and aphorisms. The worst of these conventional effusions was *Pandion and Iphigenia* (1665) by Crowne the playwright, a flagrant and ineffective copy of the *Arcadia*.

Mrs. Aphra Behn.—The novelettes of Mrs. Behn (1640–89) have more than a smack of the heroico-romantic style. Even the incidents from actual life and her own experience are, except in the finest parts of *Oroonoko*, divested by her artificial tone of all colour of reality, and subdued to the conventional hue of this phantom world. *Oroonoko*, the story of a noble savage, idealized from incidents she professed to have witnessed in Surinam, is vitalized by her vehement sympathy with the victim of man's barbarous injustice.

Satires on Romanticism.—*Don Quixote* (1605–16) did not succeed in extinguishing chivalric romance outside Spain. Later in the century Charles Sorel, author of the realistic *Francion*, wrote a parody of the pastoral, with the suggestive title *Le Berger extravagant* (1628). Scarron's *Roman Bourgeois* (1666), and, of course, Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules*, were further attacks on the romancers and their devotees; and there were others by Guéret, Subligny, and Beaugéant. The best English satire of this class was *The Female Quixote* (1752) by Mrs. Lennox, and the latest in date E. S. Barrett's *Heroine, or the Adventures of Cherubina* (1813). By this time a new fount of romanticism had been unsealed: Scott's lays of chivalry were at the height of their vogue, and the Waverley Novels on the eve of publication.

The Establishment of Realism.—With the gradual demise of the fiction which was more than half poetry, a new fiction was beginning which was entirely prosaic. The motive force behind the Elizabethan novel was the same impassioned imagination that generated the play, the lyric, and the poetry of Spenser and Milton. When this force became spent, and the time set in when men's interests centred in the world of fact; when science busied itself with registering phenomena, and humanism with the observation of contemporary types, a new kind of fiction was bound to arise. The character writers furnished description of such types on the static side, and indicated the line narrative fiction would take. But between the old kind of fiction and the new there is almost an absolute break. The novel had to go back again to the rudiments and start afresh, abandoning the right to embody its dreams and ideals in poetic figures, and restricting itself to the world of actuality.

Early Realists.—The most important contribution of the 17th century to the development of fiction was Bunyan's. His intense imagination and burning insight enabled him to carry out with unparalleled success his didactic purpose to show men exactly as they are; and instead of vague allegorical figures he peopled his stories with beings of flesh and blood, painting a graphic picture of the life he saw around him.

DANIEL DEFOE

(For other works see pp. 312, 326)

Defoe's Naturalism.—But it was Defoe who, in his fictitious histories and biographies, finally established realism as the main principle of English fiction, and in

catering for a public avid of fact established it in its most uncompromising form. Defoe is the progenitor of all the naturalists. As a manufacturer of printed matter for popular consumption, he succeeded to the business of the old purveyors of chap-books and broadsides. Ever since the invention of the printing-press there had been a market for stories of ballad heroes like Robin Hood and George a Green; for crude novels of common life, like those of Thomas Deloney; and still more crude vamping up of the debris of romance, like that in Richard Johnson's *Seven Champions of Christendom* and *Tom a Lincoln*. Defoe's lives of eminent criminals and contrite but successful swindlers were meant for the same class of readers.

His Realistic Style.—Defoe was equipped with a style perfectly adapted for such an audience. Dryden derived his style from the refined conversation of the court of Charles II. Defoe's had a humbler origin, in the coarse but racy speech of the common people. His single aim was to tell his story plainly, as it might have been told by Crusoe or Moll Flanders themselves. He sought neither grace nor polish; he cared more for clearness than for grammar; his pages bristle with the slipshod errors of colloquial speech. But his rough homespun is a medium as perfect as that attained by Maupassant. He succeeds brilliantly in the single-minded endeavour to render life as he saw it, and let the manner of the statement go.

His Realistic Stories.—Defoe was not a man to care anything about art. He never, we may be sure, tried to think out a new theory of the novel. He saw his public curious for facts. He also saw that it made little difference whether the facts were genuine or the reverse. To exploit a demand which he had accurately appraised, and to meet which he possessed the right sort of material, in the vast stock of information which he had amassed in the course of his versatile career, he dressed up his facts in pretended records of travel, pseudo-histories, and pseudo-biographies, which proved as attractive and profitable as honest narratives. Thus, in *Robinson Crusoe*, he wrote a circumstantial account of the strange adventures which had actually befallen the Scots mariner Alexander Selkirk, filling in the picture with minute details out of his own multifarious knowledge. He went on to depict with the same show of exactitude certain interesting phases of contemporary life, and to portray significant social types like Moll Flanders, Roxana, Colonel Jack—people with no charm of personality, but full of meaning to his public, because authentic representatives of the world they lived in. These portraits he drew in the simplest and most direct fashion—in short, in the natural manner of biography. There is a resemblance here to the picaresque novel, where the incidents run on fortuitously, as in life. But whereas in that the incidents are in reality carefully selected, so as to bring out the comedy of life, Defoe shows no interest either in comedy or romance. His dramatic or melodramatic effects also appear to be quite accidental, and even his frequent moralization seems to be put in merely to satisfy the common craving for a sermon in everything, especially in wickedness.

The Revolution in the Basis of Fiction.—That this revolution in the whole art of fiction is due to a fundamental change of principle is forcibly brought home if we compare the opening of Sidney's *Arcadia* with that of *Robinson Crusoe:*

> It was in the time when the earth begins to put on her new apparel against the approach of her lover, and that the sun running a most even course becomes an indifferent arbiter between the night and the day, when the hopeless shepherd Strephon was come to the sands which lie against the island of Cithera, where, viewing the place with a heavy kind of delight, and sometimes casting his eyes to the isleward, he called his friendly rival Claius unto him; and setting first down in his darkened countenance a doleful copy of what he would speak, "O my Claius," said he, "hither we are now come to pay the rent for which we are so called unto by overbusy remembrance; remembrance, restless remembrance, which claims not only this duty of us, but for it will have us forget ourselves."

Sidney is here appealing entirely to the imagination, Defoe steadily addresses himself to our sense of the actual:

> I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade, lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and after whom I was called Robinson Crusoe, and so my companions always called me.
>
> I had two elder brothers, one of which was lieutenant-colonel to an English regiment of foot in Flanders, formerly commanded by the famous Col. Lockhart, and was killed at the battle near Dunkirk against the Spaniards: what became of my second brother I never knew, any more than my father and mother did know what was become of me.

"Moll Flanders."—The autobiography of *Moll Flanders* is likewise brought into line with those memoirs of illustrious malefactors for which the general reader showed such an appetite. It opens thus:

> My true name is so well known in the records or registers at Newgate, and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not to be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work; perhaps after my death it may be better known; at present it would not be proper, no, not though a general pardon should be issued, even without exceptions of persons or crimes.
>
> It is enough to tell you, that as some of my worst comrades, who are out of the way of doing me harm (having gone out of the world by the steps and the string, as I often expected to go), knew me by the name of Moll Flanders, so you may give me leave to go under that name till I dare own who I have been, as well as who I am.

JONATHAN SWIFT

(For other works see p. 322)

Swift's Realism.—By simulating the artlessness of a man relating his own experiences, Defoe made people believe in the literal truth of stories which were not in themselves incredible. Swift used similar devices to win poetic credence—"the willing suspension of disbelief"—in the boldest distortions of probability. Wonder-stories had been told from the remotest times (Swift had a recent model in the French romances of Cyrano de Bergerac), but until the age of realism no writer had

thought it needful to authenticate his marvels with definite particulars of time and place, and a wealth of detail which had nothing to do with the story except as corroborative evidence. Swift, of course, was not a pure romancer, but a satirist diabolically in earnest. He had to make his caps fit. But the true reason for his minute realism was that he had learned the incomparable force of the impression left on the mind by facts or the semblance of facts.

The Realism of "Gulliver."—Compare the fashion in which Gulliver introduces himself and invites our company on the voyage to Lilliput with the opening of *Robinson Crusoe*:

> My Father had a small Estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the Third of Five Sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge, at Fourteen Years old, where I resided three Years, and applyed my self close to my Studies; But the Charge of maintaining me (although I had a very scanty Allowance) being too great for a narrow Fortune, I was bound Apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent Surgeon in London, with whom I continued four Years; and my Father now and then sending me small Sums of Money, I laid them out in learning Navigation, and other Parts of the Mathematicks, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my Father; where by the Assistance of Him and my Uncle John, and some other Relations, I got Forty Pounds, and a Promise of Thirty Pounds a Year to maintain me at Leyden: There I studied Physick two Years and seven Months, knowing it would be useful in long Voyages.

Note the air of artless veracity, confounding scepticism with the same superfluity of precise and largely irrelevant details as was employed by Defoe.

When Swift comes to describe the pigmy inhabitants and their towns, institutions, and ways of life, he describes the people of Europe with minute exactness, only altering the scale. The wonder-story, as clearly as the direct painting of actuality, shows the realistic method fully established.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689–1761)

Life.—Richardson, the son of a Derbyshire joiner, was apprenticed to a stationer, and set up a printing business for himself in Fleet Street, and afterwards in Salisbury Square. At the time of his entry into the world of literature he was a well-to-do person of middle age, with a country house at Hammersmith, weakly in health, of sedentary habits and nervous disposition. It was purely by accident that he dropped into the trade of novelist.

How he Came to Write.—From his early teens he had enjoyed the peculiar confidence of the opposite sex. Older girls of his acquaintance had commissioned him to indite their love-letters, and thus helped him to acquire his wide empirical knowledge of the female heart. At various times in later life he had acquitted himself creditably in small literary tasks; and now two intimate friends, London booksellers, pressed him to utilize his peculiar talents in preparing a small volume of *Familiar Letters*, which were to be at once models of this style of composition and

illustrations of "how to think and act justly and prudently, in the common Circumstances of Human Life." It was in carrying out this delicate commission that he hit upon the idea of *Pamela*. Writing two or three letters "to instruct handsome girls, who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue," he recalled a seasonable story that had come to his notice years ago. Throwing aside the *Familiar Letters*, which were published later, he began to write *Pamela*, and in two months had it finished.

"Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded" (1740–41).—Thus *Pamela* was begun and executed as an instructive illustration of the policy of being honest. It is the story of a maid-servant, "of good and prudent upbringing," whose virtue is perseveringly attempted by her master. Wise in the French sense, she remains unconquerable, though she is in love with him herself; but at the same time she manages affairs so as not to lose any advantages of the situation. Though she prizes her virtue as her dearest earthly possession, her morality is not more disinterested than that of Moll Flanders, nor does it go without reward. Her admirer finds he cannot do without her; so Pamela marries her unprincipled suitor, and becomes a fine lady.

Samuel Richardson.
(From a painting by Joseph Highmore.)

Pamela relates her tale in a journal entered up several times a day. She says:

> I have got such a knack of writing, that when by myself, I cannot sit without a pen in my hand.

The story is very prolix, the moral being fortified with many nice points of casuistry that are discussed and sagely resolved; and Pamela's gift of the pen finds exercise in faithful portraits of the inmates of Squire B.'s household—the hag who tries to bend her to his will, and the fine relations whom she ultimately confounds by her marriage. She herself is the best portrayed of all.

"Clarissa" (1747–8).—*Pamela* was Richardson's trial piece. In it he discovered the lines on which a new kind of fiction could be written. The finished masterpiece

is *Clarissa*. *Pamela* is not quite a novel, unless we qualify it as a novel of purpose But Richardson set out with no utilitarian idea in *Clarissa*, provided no earthly reward save undying fame for his heroine, and so achieved a tragedy. Clarissa is a creature of finer mould, who falls a victim to the indifference and hard-heartedness of relatives and the villainy of a seducer, the gorgeous Lovelace, and seals her chastity with her life. Not only did her history show forth the full capacity of the epistolary novel to transcribe real life ; not only did it disclose Richardson's amazing knowledge of obscure mental states and his expertness in building up character from the inside; but, carried away by the impetus of a fine idea—the idea of the natural purity and excellence of a woman's heart, and her ability to suffer shame untold without surrendering her dignity—he created a figure that could not be stuffed into the pigeon-holes of any prudential scheme of morality.

Richardson's Psychology. — Yet few healthy-minded people read *Clarissa* twice. To sensitive nerves the remorselessness of this methodical realism makes the agony intolerable. The realism of Richardson is a different thing from the realism of Defoe. The point of view has shifted from the visible world to the world of feeling and motive. His special instrument of verisimilitude is the minute accuracy of the psychological narrative, which is told with the same superabundance of relevant and irrelevant detail as Defoe used in describing physical occurrences. Dr. Johnson said that a single letter in one of Richardson's novels contains more of such knowledge than the whole of *Tom Jones*. "You say these characters are common," writes Diderot; "that one sees this sort of thing every day? You are deceived: it is that which goes on daily under one's eyes and which one never observes." Diderot, be it observed, does not deny the commonness. Richardson did not evoke exceptional characters like Sterne's or Smollett's. Even in *Clarissa* it is the strength of the character, not its strangeness, that makes it unique. All his creations are compounded of universal traits. Pamela was through and through a faithful interpretation of the point of view and natural feelings of a pious, simple, shrewd, and practical girl of humble station. In greater characters, like Clarissa and Lovelace, fundamental human traits are developed to an exceptional intensity by the writer's concentration on emotional phenomena. Sir Walter Raleigh's comparison of his most striking characters to tropical plants in a hothouse is suggestive.[1] But they are not really exotics ; they are native plants removed from their woods and fields to the sickly atmosphere of the conservatory, where heady scents and colours are stimulated to abnormal luxuriance at the expense of healthy life. When Sterne had shown the extreme possibilities of this artificial culture in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*, lesser novelists like Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling*, *The Man of the World*, and *Julia de Roubigné*, went further,

[1] *The English Novel*, xi., where Coleridge's criticism is quoted that Richardson's atmosphere is like that of "a sick-room heated by stoves."

and ended by producing a race of sentimental beings that have hardly a feature left of normal human nature.

HENRY FIELDING (1707–54)

In the story of the evolution of the modern novel, the names of Fielding and Richardson are inseparable. For eight years Fielding had been writing for the stage, caricaturing the false heroics and sentimentality of the effete drama that had succeeded Vanbrugh and Congreve, and utilizing the theatre for sly attacks on the political strategy of Sir Robert Walpole. The Licensing Act of 1737 deprived him of this outlet for his discontent, and the appearance of Richardson's *Pamela* drew his attention to the novel. He began *Joseph Andrews* as a caricature of Richardson's morality-novel. Before he had gone far with it, he was carried away by the humorous figures he had created, and produced the first novel in which characters and manners drawn from life are fitted into a story having the artistic unity and the intellectual meaning of a fine comedy. In this accidental way Fielding discovered his proper sphere. The character writers had digested the materials; Defoe had shown the realistic method of telling a story; Richardson had applied this method to the inner life of feeling and motive: Fielding now constructed the art-form comprehending all these elements, which has not been seriously modified since.

Henry Fielding.
(From the bust by Margaret Thomas.)

Life.—Fielding belonged to a branch of the Denbigh family settled in Somerset. He was educated at Eton and at Leyden. He had been brought up for the law, but combined his studies with play-writing, bringing out, before 1737, comedies, farces, and burlesques, to the number of some twenty-eight. He was called to the bar in 1740, the year *Pamela* appeared. Literature and journalism occupied his attention till 1748, when he was appointed Justice of the Peace for Westminster, the duties of which office he performed with extreme conscientiousness. *Tom Jones* was published four months later; and *Amelia*, in which the results of his magisterial acquaintance with the criminal world of London can readily be traced, in 1751. He went to Lisbon for his health in 1754, and died there in October of that year.

Works.—Fielding's plays are of scant interest now, hastily written as they were to catch the passing breeze of fashion or absurdity. One heroic burlesque, *The Tragedy of Tragedies, or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, is a grandiloquent parody. Of the novels, *Joseph Andrews* appeared in 1742, with a second edition the same year; three volumes of *Miscellanies* in 1743, comprising *Jonathan*

Wild; Tom Jones in 1748, and *Amelia* in 1751. He put some excellent occasional writing into the *Covent Garden Journal*, which he edited during 1752. He wrote some pamphlets, and in 1749 published an impressive *Charge delivered to the Grand Jury*. His posthumous *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, in spite of the melancholy of illness and approaching death, is the most delightful thing outside his novels.

Characteristics.—Fielding was a big, good-hearted, free-living, and, in mature years at any rate, a hard-working man, who was well acquainted with the worldly society that Richardson drew from second-hand knowledge, and in his own person had acquired experience of many walks of life. He had enjoyed an excellent classical education; his intelligence was sane and searching, his sense of humour acute; and he was no sentimentalist. The inherent dishonesty of Richardson's moral in *Pamela*, that honesty should be pursued, not because it is honest, but because it is the best policy, touched his sense of the ridiculous. It was for a man of more comprehensive and a healthier mind to evolve the first realistic study of life on a basis of common experience and philosophic reflection, having the organic form and the serene spirit of high comedy.

Fielding's Theory of the Novel.—In both *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, Fielding set forth at large his views on the proper constitution of the novel, purged of mere didacticism, but fortified with the critical temper and a tried philosophy of life. He regards the novel as a subdivision of epic, which, like drama, may be either tragic or comic. Homer, he says, gave a pattern of both these kinds, the latter being lost, but according to Aristotle it bore the same relation to comedy that the *Iliad* bears to tragedy. With *Joseph Andrews* in mind, a string of burlesque adventures, he naturally put the novel in the comic category. It is

> a comic epic in prose; differing from comedy, as the serious epic poem from tragedy; its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action, in this: that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous; it differs in its characters, by introducing persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us; lastly, in its sentiments and diction, by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime.

By the grave romance he means such a work as Fénelon's *Télémaque*, which he classes with the *Odyssey*, at the same time deprecating the use of the word to describe

> *Clelia, Cleopatra, Astræa, Cassandra*, the *Grand Cyrus*, and innumerable others, which contain, as I apprehend, very little instruction or entertainment.

In affiliating his novel to the epic, it is clear that Fielding was thinking rather of the narrative form than the content of epic. There is a closer analogy between his typical novel *Tom Jones* and drama, not merely in the new prominence of dialogue, but in structure. *Tom Jones* is akin to the grave philosophic comedy of Molière

Fielding's Realism.—The object of Fielding's realism is not that of Defoe, to make readers believe he is recounting facts, but to convey a general impression of life. His easy command of natural dialogue gives a vitality to his characters that Defoe's never attained. He does not try to dissect like Richardson. There are no emotional crises in his novels. Yet he seizes unerringly the essential feature in which both his and Richardson's novels differ, not only from Defoe's, but from all before them, when he says:

> It hath been thought a vast commendation of a painter to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely it is a much greater and nobler applause, that they appear to think.

The prefaces in *Tom Jones* give his mature theory. Cautiously avoiding the term "romance," he deliberately alludes to his art as "this historic kind of writing."

> We have good authority for all our characters no less than Doomsday Book, or the most authoritative book of nature. . . . Our labours have sufficient title to the name of history.

The faculties required for success in "one of the most useful as well as entertaining of all kinds of writing" are "no other than invention and judgment." And what does he mean by invention? Not a creative faculty, but

> discovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation. This, I think, can rarely exist without the concomitancy of judgment.
>
> Examine your heart, my good reader, and resolve whether you do believe these matters with me. If you do, you may now proceed to their exemplification in the following pages; if you do not, you have, I assure you, already read more than you have understood; and it would be wiser to pursue your business, or your pleasures (such as they are) than to throw away any more of your time in reading what you can neither taste nor comprehend. To treat of the effects of love to you, must be as absurd as to discourse on colours to a man born blind; since possibly your idea of love may be as absurd as that which we are told such blind man once entertained of the colour red: that colour seemed to him to be very much like the sound of a trumpet; and love probably may, in your opinion, very greatly resemble a dish of soup, or a sirloin of roast-beef.—*Tom Jones*, Book VI., ch. i.

Even the historian, as he conceives the novelist to be, must avoid incredible things, however well attested.

> But we who deal in private characters, who search into the most retired recesses, and draw forth examples of virtue and vice, from holes and corners of the world, are in a more dangerous situation. As we have no public notoriety, no concurrent testimony, no records to support and corroborate what we deliver, it becomes us not only to keep within the limits of possibility, but of probability too; and this more especially in painting what is greatly good and amiable. Knavery and folly, though never so exorbitant, will more easily meet with assent: for ill-nature adds great support and strength to faith.—*Tom Jones*, Book VIII., ch. i.

The Novel and Poetry.—In this dependence on objective truth, the novel, in Fielding's theory if not in his practice, is seen departing from its old kinship with poetry, and coming into a closer relationship with science. Pushed to its logical conclusion, such "history" is a branch of science. Fielding was anticipating many

of Zola's arguments for the scientific validity of the *roman expérimental*. He varied from the poets also in giving an intellectual interpretation of life, instead of a sensuous and emotional expression; yet, except in the reflective prefaces and passages where he takes it upon himself to discuss and explain the conduct of Sophia or some other character in an unusual situation, he executes his work entirely in the concrete. The intellectualism of the critic and interpreter lies at the very root of Fielding's realism; his work remains, however, not science transfigured by art, but art based on science.

"Joseph Andrews."—How Fielding came to write *Joseph Andrews* has already been related. It begins as a burlesque, in which the worldly-wise vestal Pamela reappears as Mrs. Booby, and her brother, the virtuous footman Joseph Andrews, repels the naughty overtures of his mistress, another wicked person of quality. But this motive soon proves inadequate, and the book evolves as a series of picaresque adventures in which the central character is Parson Adams, one of the most delectable blends of simple goodness and comic idiosyncrasy in literature. This charming cleric and the humorous figures Mrs. Slipslop, Mrs. Towwouze, and Parson Trulliber, with picturesque incidents on the highway and in country houses and village inns, leave a much stronger impression than the ironical digs at Richardson, neatly as these are planted.

"Tom Jones."—*Tom Jones* is a far superior exposition of Fielding's theory of the novel. Here Fielding poured out the wealth of a varied and ripened experience, and expressed in artistic terms his view how life should be lived. The plot, which, in spite of Fielding's weakness for irrelevant episodes, is a piece of complicated and shapely architecture, turns on the ultimate recognition of Tom's blood relationship to Squire Allworthy, his wealthy stepfather, and on the ups and downs of his love for the adorable Sophia Western, daughter of a neighbouring landowner. Tom is a young fellow endowed with good nature and strong appetites, but open and unsuspicious. He falls an easy prey to temptation, and quickly repents. He is a sinner, but not a villain. In all points he is the antithesis of Blifil, his rival in Allworthy's favour and for Sophia's hand. Blifil is mean and servile; he learns correct behaviour by rote, he never has a good impulse. Blifil and the too faultless Allworthy are intellectual concepts rather than real people. So, in genesis, are the philosophers Square and Thwackum, the one standing for abstract ethics, the other for slavish and unenlightened obedience to the commandments. These four represent definite factors in a problem of life, and are only partially vitalized.

But apart from these, the novel is crowded with living human creatures; some, like Squire Western and his sister, Tom's henchman Partridge, and Sophia's mercenary tirewoman Mrs. Honour, among the most delightful originals in fiction. Squire Western is pure naturalism. Flaubert might have made him more odious; Zola would have made him repulsive: neither could have dealt with him more

candidly than Fielding has done. Not a failing is spared; yet neither sympathy nor satire has altered a line of his truth to nature. He is coarse, brutal, selfish, and stupid: yet we might as well try to dislike Falstaff.

Tom Jones, taken as a whole, is a faithful picture of Fielding's world. He never went far below the surface; but in the multitude of minor characters, servants, country folk, members of the squirearchy or of the fashionable world of London, the sense of abounding life and rich idiosyncrasy is never lacking. Where verisimilitude fails is in those principal figures that are distorted from sober truth to fit the intellectual scheme, or caricatured through Fielding's weakness for burlesque and farce.

"Amelia."—He was not less satirical in *Amelia*, but the satire is in more deadly earnest. His painful observation of the hideousness of vice in two years of service as a magistrate has given it a purpose. Amelia, though drawn from the same model as Sophia, his beloved first wife, is not a fine lady, but a plain, long-suffering woman, such as George Eliot might have drawn, whose angelic virtues are revealed to her unheeding husband in the trials of married life. The absurdities of the law which filled Newgate with artificially manufactured criminals and made the courts a place where justice was bought and sold, are exposed with the old wit and humour. But when Fielding depicts the rogues, the drunkards, and the poverty-stricken victims of debauchery, he assumes the censorial air of the justice delivering his *Charge to the Grand Jury*, and diagnosing the demoralization of society and its causes. In this temper he comes much closer than elsewhere to the specific realism of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*. The description of London life is full of particular detail; the rogues and fools are less diverting than those in his previous novels, and are branded indelibly with the revolting ugliness of villainy and vice. *Amelia* is the beginning of that branch of fiction which eventually brought forth the slum-novel.

His Other Stories.—Between *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* Fielding wrote a witty Lucianic fable, *A Journey from this World to the Next*, and *The History of Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743). The former may have been written before *Joseph Andrews*. The journey is a satire on human nature, Minos deciding in sardonic fashion on various claims to enter Elysium. *Jonathan Wild* displays Fielding's powerful intellect exercising itself in a work of sustained irony, without the least concession to sentiment. His thesis is that mere greatness divorced from goodness must needs degenerate into pure rascality. It is embodied in a history of the notorious thief-taker hanged at Tyburn in 1725. He is the hero of a grimmer chronicle than Defoe's lives of criminals, a chronicle with no human charm but much hard intellectual force.

SMOLLETT AND STERNE

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT (1721–71).—Smollett was a Scot educated at Glasgow University, who served his apprenticeship to a surgeon and apothecary, came to

London with a tragedy to dispose of, and on its rejection by Garrick entered the navy as a surgeon, sailing with Admiral Vernon's expedition to the West Indies in 1740. The miseries of the disastrous attempt on Cartagena are recounted in his first novel, *Roderick Random*, which is largely made up of personal reminiscences. He came back, and settled as a surgeon in London, published novels, ran the *Critical Review*, began his voluminous *History of England*, and edited a violent Tory organ, *The Briton*. He had been imprisoned for a libel in his review in 1759; but his most scurrilous performance was a satire on contemporary events called *Adventures of an Atom* (1769), which another soured and less-gifted slanderer, Charles Johnstone, emulated in *Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea*. Overwork and irritation broke him down in middle age, and he quitted England, only to die near Leghorn, where, however, he wrote his one book that can be termed genial, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*.

Characteristics.—Smollett set little store by the recent improvements in the structure of the novel, and went for his pattern to the obsolete picaresque romancers, with their random adventures loosely strung on the thread of a hero's biography. He is a satirist because, like his favourite, Roderick Random, he considers himself "better acquainted with the selfishness and roguery of mankind," and is not to be imposed upon by appearances. He sees nothing in the world to admire, and in his Hogarthian way draws what he fondly believes to be a faithful picture, but which is in reality a pasquinade. He doubtless thought that the personal sketches with which his pages teem gave an extra solidity to the realism, and mistook his savage animosity for the noble indignation of the moralist.

"Roderick Random."—*The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) is a highly coloured version of his own early adventures, mingled with some crude romance, the undeserving hero being rewarded with a handsome heiress. Smollett also had come to town an impecunious Scot, and tried to make his fortune as a medical practitioner. He had himself encountered the prototypes of those singular creatures, Lieutenant Bowling, Captain Oakum, Dr. Macshane, and the Welsh surgeon Morgan, and smarted grievously from the encounter. Roderick is not a more ingratiating person than his creator. He is peppery, conceited, suspicious, with an eagle eye for meanness and vice (of which he has his own full share), and all but blind to the better side of men or things. Smollett extolled as the most precious of gifts loyalty to a friend. Roderick treats the faithful affection of his Sancho, Strap the barber, with hearty contempt. The poor fellow cannot save his master from the dogs, at the expense of his last copper, without becoming an object of ridicule; and the contumelious fashion in which he is dismissed from the stage speaks badly for Smollett's own generosity. Strap's estimable qualities are apparently due to his original and not to his creator. But the tale is told with amazing vigour. The boisterous humour and naked realism of the scenes on shipboard atoned for the

coarseness and brutality, and made this first novel of the sea the ancestor of one of the most flourishing stocks in English fiction, the nautical romance.

"Peregrine Pickle."—*The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) is another picaresque novel. The best of the characters are again seamen. Commodore Trunnion, Lieutenant Hatchway, and the bo'sun Tom Pipes are brilliant grotesques. Peregrine, however, is not a whit better than his predecessor. He is a mean scoundrel, with whose adventures and unsavoury amours one cannot feel the slightest sympathy, and many others of the *dramatis personæ* are recognizable caricatures of Smollett's supposed enemies. His powers of derision are equal to those of any English writer, and hardly any other literature could yield such an anthology of invective. He could put life into a character by mere force of abuse; yet the result was not human beings, but what has been well described as "comic beasts in human shape." The finest, however, far transcend mere caricature, like the humorous creations of Dickens, who owed more to Smollett than to any other writer.

Minor Novels.—*The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), is much inferior as a work of sardonic art to Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. It relates the adventures and misdeeds of a scamp who was the offspring of a repulsive old camp-follower. Here coarse comedy is superseded by mystery and blood-curdling incident, and the stage properties and atmosphere of the coming Gothic romance are prepared. His *Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves* (1762) is a clumsy satire on the lines of *Don Quixote* or *Hudibras*.

"Humphry Clinker."—Not till his very last days did he return to fiction, and then he wrote the ripest and pleasantest of all his satires. *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) chronicles the peregrinations and observations of a Welsh family, a bevy of delightful oddities, on a tour through England, Scotland, and Wales. A few years before Smollett himself had returned from abroad, and revisited his native Scotland. The scenes in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and the Highlands are particularly familiar and racy, and not untouched with a human feeling that, as a rule, is conspicuously missing in his work. It is a farcical miscellany, as inchoate as the *Pickwick Papers*, written in letters which reveal, most divertingly, the incompatible views of the different chroniclers. The irascible but tender-hearted old bachelor Matthew Bramble, his shrewish sister Mrs. Tabitha, her maid Winifred Jenkins, and the eccentric old Scots soldier Lismahago, are as comic as Lieutenant Bowling and Commodore Trunnion, and tolerably free from their violence and coarseness. The exception to the general criticism that Smollett observed with extraordinary acuteness but never reflected, is to be found in the mellowed portraiture and the amusing epistolary gossip of *Humphry Clinker*.

LAURENCE STERNE (1713–68).—Sterne was one of the children of an army officer, and was born at Clonmel. His early boyhood was spent in the wandering life to

which the family of a married subaltern in those days was condemned. Then he went to Halifax Grammar School, and from there to Cambridge. At the university he became intimate with the noted jester and free-liver John Hall Stevenson, the Eugenius of *Tristram Shandy*, at whose "Crazy Castle" at Skelton he in later days made one of a circle of jovial spirits almost as famous as the Hell-fire Club or "Monks of Medmenham." In due course he was ordained, and from 1736 to 1759 held various country livings in Yorkshire. He married in 1741, and seems to have lost little time in beginning a series of vigorous flirtations with different ladies, which estranged him from his wife, and ended in a formal separation, though not till almost the eve of his death. The one child of the marriage, afterwards Madame Medalle, editor of his Letters, he seems to have genuinely loved.

Laurence Sterne.
(From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

Works. — Sterne was forty-seven when he commenced author, with the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy*. The book brought him instant fame, though at York his alleged caricature of a local personage as Dr. Slop, and perhaps others, raised a scandal. Sterne was lionized in London, and exploited his fame by issuing two collections of *Sermons by Yorick*, after the character in which he had painted a flattering portrait of himself. He went on with the publication of the other volumes, in spite of protests from various quarters against the indecorous character of his writings and his behaviour. He travelled in France and Italy, met Smollett in Naples, entered into a warm flirtation with Mrs. Draper, published the *Sentimental Journey*, and died in a state of insolvency, leaving his wife and daughter to be relieved by subscriptions and the publication of his sermons.

"Tristram Shandy."—*The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.* (1759–67) is the whimsical masterpiece of an incomparable jester. It is not to be described in the ordinary terms of criticism, least of all by its title. Tristram is a person of slight importance in the galaxy of humorous creations that shine with steady lustre or sparkle in transient appearance on the scene. His father and uncle are the

figures on which the eye is chiefly focused, and with the grotesque man-midwife, Dr. Slop, the stolid and humdrum Mrs. Shandy, Uncle Toby's devoted henchman Corporal Trim, the widow Wadman, and a number of minor characters make an inimitable group of humorous idealisms of an order quite new in English fiction. Both the crotchety Mr. Shandy and that exquisite visionary Uncle Toby have an obvious kinship with Don Quixote. But there are profound differences between the satirical comedy of Cervantes and the humorous raillery of Sterne.

Superficially, *Tristram Shandy* is a medley of realism and burlesque and of random drollery, sporting with human virtues and foibles, digressing at will into philosophic disquisitions that lead nowhere, apparently devoid of plot or design, yet constructed with a subtle art that gives every character and trait its most effective foil. The author plays all sorts of jokes on his reader, travestying the comic framework of Fielding, and playing a game of blind-man's buff in his abrupt digressions, full stops, and elaborate surprises. It is the making of half his effects that they contradict expectation.

The "Sentimental Journey."—*A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) is "Mr. Yorick's" account of his recent experiences on the Continent. The journey, with its vaguely-sketched incidents and, still more, its continuous moralizings, is a vehicle as charming as the more elaborate novel for Sterne's elusive humour and sentimentalism. It gives, further, a more chastened and refined example of his style.

> Dear sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows!—thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bed of straw—and 'tis thou who liftest him up to *Heaven!*—eternal fountain of our feeling!—'tis here I trace thee,—and this is the "divinity which stirs within me";—not that, in some sad and sickening moments, "*my soul shrinks back upon herself, and startles at destruction!*"—mere pomp of words!—but that I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself;—all comes from thee, great, great *Sensorium* of the world! which vibrates, if a hair of our heads but fall upon the ground, in the remotest desert of thy creation.—Touched with thee, Eugenius draws my curtain when I languish,—hears my tale of symptoms, and blames the weather for the disorder of his nerves. Thou givest a portion of it sometimes to the roughest peasant who traverses the bleakest mountains;—he finds the lacerated lamb of another's flock.—This moment I behold him leaning with his head against his crook, with piteous inclination looking down upon it!—Oh, had I come one moment sooner!—it bleeds to death;—his gentle heart bleeds with it!—Vol. II., *The Bourbonnois.*

Characteristics.—Sterne was too eccentric a genius to exercise any decisive influence on the course of literature, though he set a passing fashion, and has given inspiration to a few later writers naturally, or unnaturally, akin. Shandyism is an esoteric cult. Sterne was a realist in only a limited sense. He applied himself, not to make a general picture of life, but to find an uncharted region of human nature where his freakish imagination could frolic unchecked. This region he did not discover in the open-air world of Fielding. Like Richardson, he preferred the abnormal atmosphere of the hothouse. He revelled in sentiment, he delighted in the luxury of tears. But he was greater than Richardson as a creator of beings having an independent life of their own, and instead of the tragedy of sentiment he gave the comedy. Sterne

prized fools and their follies like a virtuoso. He developed the whims and humours he found in life, to the utmost limits of a fancy revelling in the grotesque.

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Chapter 7. GEORGIAN PHILOSOPHY

Lord Shaftesbury—Bishop Berkeley—David Hume—Bishop Butler—Adam Smith

LORD SHAFTESBURY (1671–1712)

Life.—Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, was born in London in 1671, and educated at Winchester, from 1683 to 1686, under the influence of Locke. At one time a member of Parliament, he devoted most of his life to study, never enjoying good health. He travelled in Holland, published his first work in 1708, married in 1709, and died at Naples in 1712. His ethical pamphlets were collected in 1711, as *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times.*

Character.—One should not perhaps take Lord Shaftesbury's pose as an amateur or dilettante too seriously. Shut out from a political career by his physical infirmities, it was inevitable that he should at least affect to trifle with the humbler occupations of an enforced leisure. If the manner is superficial, or, as Charles Lamb called it, " genteel," there is a real and consistent completeness about the matter. He detected a serious fallacy in the arguments of his predecessors ; and was something of a pioneer in 18th-century speculation, pointing the way to its psychological ethics. Shaftesbury, moreover, had an easy and humorous style, giving a much-needed order and clearness to English prose.

Theories.—He established one definite principle of morals—that man is not self-contained, but a " centre of forces in a complex society," wherefore " virtue and vice may be discriminated without reference to the self-interest of him who judges." The habit of critical analysis made him unorthodox, and, in matters of faith, a deist.

BISHOP BERKELEY (1685–1753)

Life.—George Berkeley was born near Kilkenny on March 16, 1685, educated at the Kilkenny Grammar School and at Trinity College, Dublin, where, before he was twenty-eight, he wrote some of his best philosophy. In 1713 he went to London, and, on Swift's introduction, met all the wits ; spent seven years as a travelling tutor, and returned to Ireland in 1721. Three years later he was made Dean of Derry, but having married and formulated a scheme for a Missionary College at the Bermudas, went for three years to Rhode Island. Not, however, receiving the support promised him by the Government, he came back to England in 1731, and was appointed Bishop of Cloyne three years later. A model Christian and bishop, he lived and worked in the diocese till six months before his death in January 1753—his last days being spent at Oxford.

One of the three or four great masters of 18th-century prose, Bishop Berkeley has also been credited with the possession of "every virtue under heaven," and there does not appear to be much exaggeration in the phrase. Touching Plato in the perfection of his style as a philosopher, the perfection of his character has proved in the same measure unassailable.

Berkeley's Idealism.—If he adopted, or rather adapted, Locke, all subsequent philosophers have been content to form themselves round, or against, the unconquerable idealism of Berkeley. He, more than any other exponent of metaphysics, achieved the golden mean between the stiff, unliterary technique which misses the human appeal, and the popular, artistic imagination which lacks precision. Most of his work is centred around his "theory of ideas," enlarging the doctrine that "things, so far as they have any meaning for us, exist in our minds only." He is most entertaining, and most literary, in the popular *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher* (1732); most suggestive, perhaps, in the much earlier *New Theory of Vision* (1709), or the *Dialogue of Hylas and Philonous* (1713).

It was, no doubt, in part inheritance and environment that gave him the power he was able to wield so successfully. Irish wit grafted upon an intellect of English solidity; a first-class education; leisure, material prosperity, and the stimulus of select friendships laid a promising foundation. He was writing when the great essayists were actually at work upon the refinement of an English prose first shaped by Dryden. He was thinking when Locke had swept away the old cobwebs and men were still respectful and sympathetic towards metaphysical speculations. His faith was admirably adapted to combat the crudity of early deism and that criticism which was merely destructive.

Style.—Yet genius never grew out of opportunity alone, and Berkeley's was a master mind, a master style. He was supremely well-bred and urbane; ready for a gay, honest fight with any adversary; subtly responsive to delicacies of feeling; at once limpid, logical, and imaginative; never petty or provoking. His noble eloquence was phrased to precision without frigidity; his "ornaments" and illustrations are always well-chosen and dramatic, never trivial or deceptive. He was reverent by instinct and unerring in taste; few men ever said better what was so well worth saying.

His Other Works.—Besides the books mentioned already, he produced the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) during his residence in Dublin; and when Bishop of Boyne, more than thirty years later, the *Querist*, and *Siris*, a book of metaphysics for the man in the street, with its treatise on tar-water and other quaint speculations.

Though his more technical philosophy, perhaps naturally, was written before he was thirty, and his more "popular" expositions grew out of wider acquaintance with the world, we cannot detect any real flaw in the continuity of his doctrine. Accepting, and living, the faith of an earlier century, he upheld its gospel with the

science of his own, and remained free from materialism. Essentially he is not of the 18th century, and yet its outward formality, built on a code in art, its strong common sense, and its healthy abhorrence of anything slipshod, certainly influenced his genius. Probably no other time and place could have produced Berkeley—the metaphysician inferior only to Plato in the combination of subtlety of thought and grace of expression.

DAVID HUME (1711–76)

Life.—David Hume, a cadet of a distinguished Scottish house (who had hitherto spelt their name "Home"), was born at Edinburgh in April 1711. After attending the ordinary classes at the university of his native city, he was put to the law, but privately persevered in his study of the classics. Family funds were sufficient for him to live for a time, no doubt economically, in France, and publish his first book on philosophy (*A Treatise on Human Nature*, 1739), which is perhaps his greatest. As at the time the volume escaped even abuse, the author in search of a living was driven in 1745 to "companion" a mentally deficient young marquess. Afterwards as secretary to General St. Clair he visited Vienna and Turin, and saw something of the best society.

David Hume.
(From an engraving after Allan Ramsay.)

Meanwhile the comparative success of the *Moral and Philosophical Essays* had encouraged his ambitions, and experience gained abroad seemed to justify the leisure he devoted for two years, at the house of a brother, to the composition of his *Political Discourses* and his *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*. The year 1742 found him in charge of the Edinburgh Advocates' Library, more than content with the material for study at his command. He wrote a *History of England* (1754–62) and became famous. After a brief experience as interim secretary to the embassy of Paris, he was appointed under-secretary of state, and was able, in 1769, to retire in comfort to Edinburgh for a seven years' sojourn among the *élite* of the city. He died in August 1776.

Hume's "History."—The first volume of Hume's *History*, beginning with James I. and only extending to the execution of Charles I., was a complete failure. The second, covering the Commonwealth to the Revolution, for some reason won immediate

and universal applause. Four others, including earlier events and the tale of the Tudors, completed his work. The age was not critical, and the partial if brilliant narrative of statements gathered, but not digested, from very doubtful authorities being accepted without question, gave him a leading position among the historians of the century.

Style.—A marked rigidity somewhat detracts from the undoubted vigour of his style, which is neither spirited nor colloquial. There is everywhere, indeed, a sense of effort. Something obviously must be allowed in this matter for his horror of provincialisms. Having a high standard of purity, he deliberately prepared a list of Scotticisms, against which he, as a Scotsman, might thereby guard. Inevitably the strain shows through, making him over precise. The coolest of metaphysicians, he made an art of elegance and simplicity, but he is never easy and seldom simple.

Hume's Philosophy.—He had no conception of the untiring research and considered judgment demanded from modern scholars, and it is by his earlier neglected philosophy that Hume lives to-day. Heading the sceptical revolt against Locke's doctrine of common sense as idealized by Berkeley, he presented the appeal to experience with startling courage, acuteness, and penetration. In him there is no enthusiasm —one might say no emotion. He writes quite simply and frankly, as a superior person whose sneers and sarcasms, however pointed and effective, spring from amused pity. His resolute intellect enabled him to attain by conscious effort much of the power which springs spontaneously from other men of genius. He honestly sought after truth, and dared to tell the truth as he saw it. His influence on thought was far-reaching and has stood time's test. For mental vigour we must place him among the elect of a century whose characteristics, indeed, are embodied in the man.

BISHOP BUTLER (1692–1752)

Life.—Joseph Butler was born at Wantage and trained for the Presbyterian ministry; but, going to Oriel College, Oxford, joined the Church of England, and subsequently took orders. Being appointed preacher at the Rolls Chapel in 1718, he there delivered the famous *Sermons* which were published in 1726. He was rector of Houghton (1721–5), rector of Stanhope, Durham (1725–33), chaplain to Lord Chancellor Talbot (1733). *The Analogy of Religion*, "natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature," appeared in 1736. Rapid preferment followed its publication; Butler being appointed Bishop of Bristol in 1737, Dean of St. Paul's in 1740, and Bishop of Durham in 1750. He died at Bath in 1752, and was buried in Bristol Cathedral.

Butler's Philosophic Views.—Though a "professional" theologian, and very sincere in his faith, Bishop Butler was before all things a logical writer and a devotee

of argument. His appeal was always to reason, and his conclusions on ethics and natural theology were in fact largely influenced by Greek thought. Following the Stoic conception of an order or system joining nature with humanity, he " leads us beyond the Stoics " to Aristotle and his " golden mean." Arguing from experience, he maintains that the virtuous man " follows nature," while " vice is a violation of our own nature." It is for conscience " to preside and govern over our appetites and passions ; " from the supremacy of conscience " we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature." Butler occasionally used " plain speaking " on practical questions ; but his general appeal was to reason, and he wrote most willingly upon the broad general questions of philosophy.

Style.—The *Analogy* is a standard presentment of apologetics, many sentences from which have grown into household words ; but the ethics of the *Sermons* has more literary merit and exerted more influence. Always clear and crisp, here he rises frequently to a remarkable eloquence of thought and diction.

ADAM SMITH (1723–90)

Life.—Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy and educated at Glasgow University, and Balliol College, Oxford ; completing his studies at twenty-four. During the two following years (1748–9) he lectured in Edinburgh to distinguished audiences on rhetoric and criticism. In 1751 he was appointed professor of logic at Glasgow, and became professor of moral philosophy in 1752. He wrote two critical papers on Johnson's *Dictionary* and on the " State of Learning in Europe " in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1755 ; and four years later published a *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, his literary masterpiece. Resigning his professorship in 1763, he accompanied the Duke of Buccleuch as travelling tutor in an interesting itinerary of France and Switzerland. The *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* appeared in 1776. He was a commissioner of customs for Scotland from 1778 until his death at Edinburgh in 1790.

Works.—When as it were on his trial, he exhibited a good deal of literary skill in the *Moral Sentiments*. *The Wealth of Nations* is homely, colloquial, and not free from actually bad grammar. Fanciful only in simile, the main argument is scrupulously clear, and based on a very cautious examination of the facts. It has been well said that " he found the leading idea of art to be imitation ; of ethics, sympathy ; of political economy, commercial ambition and industrial liberty." His ambition was to discover the " order and connecting principles " of science and philosophy.

Theories.—He did actually inaugurate and establish a scientific foundation for the study of political economy, upholding as his main thesis that true national prosperity can only be derived from labour. He was a thinker who directly applied his

arguments and his conclusions to the reform of national policy, and few writers have *made* so much history.

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View of Selborne.
(From an old print.)

Chapter 8. LATER GEORGIAN PROSE

Samuel Johnson—Burke—Horace Walpole—Gibbon—Gilbert White

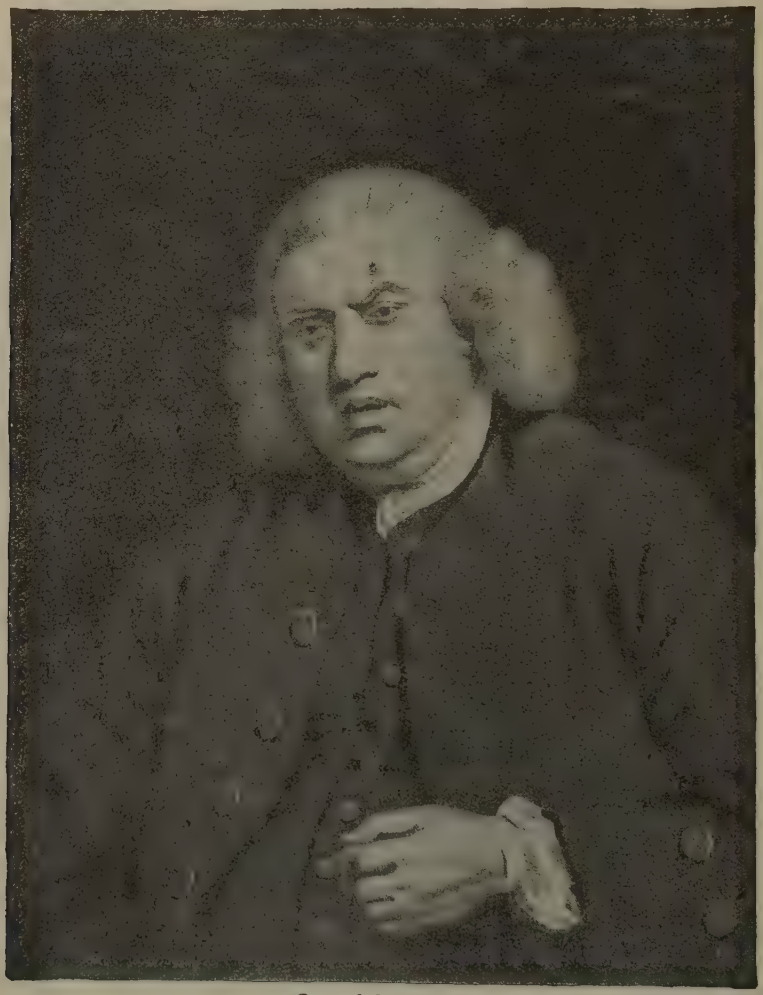
SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709–84)

(For other works see pp. 330, 384)

Life.—The son of a struggling Jacobite bookseller, Johnson was born above his father's shop at Lichfield. He inherited a massive frame, scrofula, with some defect in sight and hearing, and hypochondria. After schooling at Lichfield and Stourbridge, he spent two years at home, read much, and made himself a Latin scholar. Sent to Pembroke College, Oxford, he left through poverty without a degree. His father dying, he became an usher at Market Bosworth, but after months of misery went to Birmingham as hack-writer for a publisher. In 1735 he married Mrs. Porter, a mercer's widow twenty years his senior. With her small means he set up a school at Edial (Garrick a pupil there), but it failed ; and in 1737 he went with Garrick to London, little in his pocket but three acts of a tragedy. He got work from Cave of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and next year some repute by his poem of *London*, imitated from Juvenal. He supplied Cave with " Debates in Parliament," largely fictitious, and lived with Savage, a Grub Street writer, who died in 1743, and whose life Johnson wrote. He was still wretchedly poor, but his wife now rejoined him. Now, too, he got to know Levett, a paupers' doctor and a pauper himself. In 1747 Johnson issued his *Plan for an English Dictionary*, on which he worked for seven years, living in Gough Square. In 1749 appeared his best poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, a sincere imitation of Juvenal, and his tragedy of *Irene* was produced by Garrick with small success. For two years, from March 1750, the *Rambler* appeared twice a week, all the numbers but eight his own. It ended just before the death of his beloved wife. In 1753 he wrote numbers in the *Adventurer*. In these years, although he was receiving pay for the *Dictionary*, he still lacked enough to live on. The publication of the *Dictionary* in 1755 increased the fame which he had got by the *Rambler*, and except in the circle of Walpole and Gray, he came to be recognized as " the great Cham of literature." He was still poor, but he gave shelter to Levett and Miss Williams, blind daughter of a deceased physician. Later they were joined by Mrs. Desmoulins, a penniless daughter of Johnson's godfather, and a Miss Carmichael. The ceaseless quarrels of this " seraglio," as he called it, never subdued their benefactor's patience.

For some years he seems to have lived by work for the *Literary Magazine* and by the *Idler*, a periodical of a hundred and three numbers, all but twelve his own. He had issued proposals for an edition of Shakespeare, and worked on it slowly

In 1759 his mother died, and in the evenings of a week he wrote *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, to pay for her funeral. In 1762 he was nominated to a pension of



Samuel Johnson.
(From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

£300 a year, and from this time had sufficient for his wants and charities. In 1763 Boswell made his acquaintance.

In 1764 he seconded Sir Joshua Reynolds in founding the "Club," Burke and Goldsmith being also among the original members. The *Shakespeare* had lingered

but stimulated by a sneer of Churchill's, Johnson brought it out in 1765. He published no list of subscribers, for he had "lost all the names . . . and spent all the money." He must, however, have got something from the later editions. He had been obliged in 1759 to give up his house, but now took another in Johnson's Court. About the same time began a great change in his life through a friendship made with the Thrales. Thrale was a sensible man of forty, with a house and brewery in Southwark, for which borough he afterwards sat in Parliament. Mrs. Thrale, sixteen years younger, was lively and literary, and proud to welcome the great Cham. They gave Johnson, whose health was now failing, a room in their house, and he made them long visits, returning weekly from Streatham to give a Sunday dinner to his seraglio. He also travelled, visiting Oxford, Lichfield, his old friend Taylor at Ashbourne, Brighton with the Thrales, and other places.

Although the pension laid Johnson under no obligation, he chose to write four political pamphlets between 1770 and 1775, while he also revised the *Dictionary*. In 1773 he was induced by Boswell to go a tour with him to Scotland and the Hebrides, no easy journey in those days. In 1775, for the first and last time, he visited the Continent, spending two months in France with the Thrales, and noting that "the great live very magnificently but the rest very miserably."

In 1777 he was engaged by the booksellers to write the *Lives of the Poets*, the four first volumes appearing in 1779, and the six last in 1781. The death of Thrale in this year was a heavy blow. For a time he still visited Streatham, but in 1782 Mrs. Thrale broke up her household, partly because the house was too large for her means, more because she was moving towards a marriage with Piozzi, an Italian of good lineage who taught music. As Johnson objected to the husband for his calling, his foreign birth, and his Roman religion, the friendship of twenty years was broken. Allowance must be made for a dying man. In 1782 he had felt deeply the death of Levett, and next year he had a stroke of the palsy, followed by other painful ailments. He had all the attention that skill and friendship could confer, and, much as he had feared death, he met it with calmness at the last.

Works. — Besides the works mentioned above, Johnson wrote *Lives* of Sarpi (1738), Boerhaave (1739), Blake, Drake, Barretier (1740), Burmann, Sydenham (1742), Cheynel (1751), Cave (1754), Sir Thomas Browne (1756), Ascham (1763); also *The Vision of Theodore the Hermit* (1748), *Character of Collins* (1763); prologues on the opening of Drury Lane Theatre (1747), for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter (1750), for *The Good-Natured Man* (1768), and other occasional verses and miscellaneous pieces.

Character. — Johnson was a man of high principle and some passion, of unswerving moral and physical courage, of genuine affection and great tenderness, of honest

pride and sturdy independence, and of strong common-sense. His devoutness he ascribed to Law's *Serious Call*. Rough in his manners, and dubbed "Ursa Major," he had, as Goldsmith said, "nothing of the bear but his skin," and to be poor and honest was a sufficient recommendation to him. He loved good living, but he could be long abstemious. Naturally dilatory, he wrote his best poem and most of his best prose at a white heat. He revelled in argument for its own sake, and as a boy "used always to choose the wrong side of a debate." A sturdy faith in his own calling

Dr. Johnson in Lord Chesterfield's Anteroom.
(From the painting by E. M. Ward, R.A.)

made him say that "the chief glory of every people arises from its authors." He was "radically wretched," but his wretchedness had little connection with his real misfortunes, and allowed intervals of great enjoyment. His mind, but for some natural and temporary bitterness, soared above neglect, poverty, and failure. Like his strange dread of death, his unhappiness was constitutional and interlaced with his vein of superstition. It follows that it was incurable. Aware of some at least of his own human weaknesses, he could tolerate, if a man's principles were but right, much laxity in his practice. *Homo fuit.*

Characteristics.—In criticism Johnson was a man of his age, and applied to poetry

the tests of reason and common-sense. He is at his best on the school of Dryden and Pope, at his worst in his depreciation of Virgil's Eclogues (in the *Adventurer*), of Milton's shorter poems, and of Gray's *Odes*. His work on Shakespeare is intermediate, but his textual emendations of *Macbeth* are not acceptable. Though called a philosopher, he was such only in a popular sense. He had no metaphysics, and regarded Hume merely as an infidel. As a strong Church and King man he had little tolerance for any divergence from orthodoxy, the less that he was half aware of some difficulties in his own attitude. Thus he said, "Every man who attacks my belief diminishes in some degree my confidence in it, and therefore makes me uneasy." In his *Dictionary* he would not cite the Arian Clarke, though on his deathbed he pressed Brocklesby to read him, as "fullest on the propitiatory sacrifice"; and he said that the nonconformist Watts "never wrote but for a good purpose." For political liberty in Hampden's sense he had little regard, and he called Burke "a bottomless Whig." Yet, even if his sympathy with the downtrodden majority in Ireland was partly due to his hatred of Whigs, he could take a view pleasing to neither party. At Oxford he gave as a toast: "The next insurrection of the negroes in the West Indies;" and his opposition to the slave trade made the Tory Boswell glad that we had a House of Lords which would prevent its abolition. His assault on the American rising came as much from his hatred of slave-owners as from his politics. Perhaps, had he lived to see the beginnings of the French Revolution, he would have disagreed with Burke. He had many English prejudices, but here his mind was free.

To Johnson life is a sphere of duties, but gives no prospect of happiness. This view he expresses in the *Rambler* and *Rasselas*. The papers, sometimes wrongly called sermons, in fact describe the career of man as it seemed to their author. *Rasselas*, contemporary with Voltaire's *Candide* and like it in theme, differs much in tone. It is significant that the last chapter is headed "The conclusion in which nothing is concluded." Such is life, and it cannot be altered.

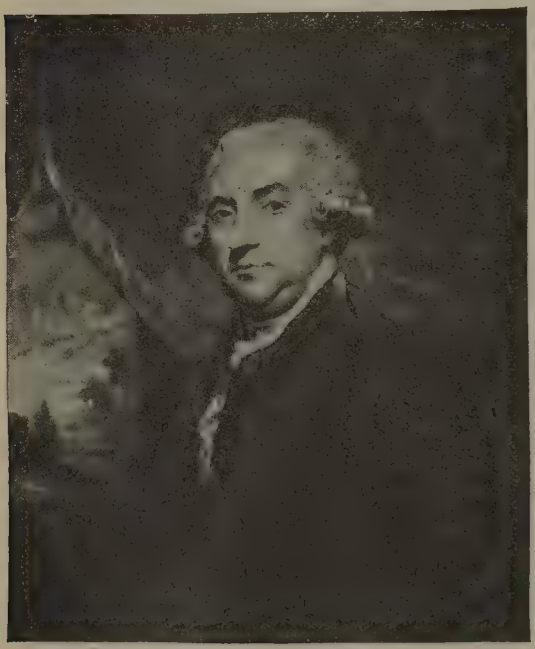
The *Dictionary* is a wonderful work for one man to have achieved. It is not historical, for philology and etymology were not yet sciences, and its quotations hardly cover two centuries. Some of his definitions have a purposely political bias, some are intentionally humorous. Its excellence lies in the notes of current usages and the choice of illustrative passages.

The *Lives of the Poets* show Johnson at his best. Exceptions are the life of Milton, vitiated by political bias, and the meagre and unsympathetic account of Gray. He made few minute researches, writing freely from his gathered knowledge and criticizing after his own principles. Even the life of Pope, though on Pope much has since come to light, must still be read.

The *Journey to the Hebrides*, less interesting than Boswell's, shows that Johnson travelled rather to study men than to admire scenery. None of his writings is more characteristic, and in none are there finer specimens of his stately prose.

Of the political pamphlets, *The False Alarm* (1770) is a hopeless attempt to justify the seating of Luttrell for Middlesex; that on *Falkland's Islands* (1771) an attack on Chatham and "Junius," who would have made a *casus belli* of the Spanish expulsion of our garrison; and *Taxation no Tyranny* (1775), a vain effort to justify the Ministry's policy on America. *The Patriot* (1774) was written for Thrale's candidature in Southwark. The vigour of the pamphlets is heightened by his hatred of the Whigs, but they show little political insight.

The edition of Shakespeare surpasses its predecessors. Its chief value now lies in the common-sense vindication of Shakespeare as a student of man, for here poet and critic met on common ground, when Johnson could cry, "Unimitated, inimitable Falstaff."



James Boswell.
(From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

Style.—Johnson's style in middle life was ponderous and monotonous, but suited his sombre themes. The words are often too long and the sentences too nicely balanced. Its complexity was a reaction against the simple, direct, and homely style of Anne's time. In the *Lives of the Poets* the style is lighter, and would be more evidently so if a full stop took the place, as it often could, of a semicolon. The phrasing comes nearer conversation, and Johnson's conversation, as reported by Boswell and Mrs. Piozzi, is a delight.

Boswell's Life.—That Johnson is so living a figure to the world is largely due to the fact that his life by Boswell is perhaps the best biography in the language. James Boswell (1740–95) was the son of a Scottish judge, Lord Auchinleck, and made Johnson's acquaintance in 1763. Till his master's death he was a devout disciple, and he recorded the details of Johnson's daily life and conversation in a work (1791) which is a masterpiece of faithful, and also artistic, portraiture. Boswell wrote other works, notably the *Account of Corsica* (1768), and the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785), which latter is a modest classic of travel.

EDMUND BURKE (1729–97)

Life.—Born in Dublin, the son of a Protestant attorney and a Roman Catholic mother, Burke was bred at the school of Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker, in Kildare, and at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1750 he came to London as a student of the Middle Temple, but he disliked the law and spent his time in general reading and travelling. In 1756 he published two works, a satire on Bolingbroke and a treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful. Next year he married the daughter of Dr. Nugent, his physician. In 1758 Dodsley began the publication of the *Annual Register*, and Burke was his chief contributor. In 1759 he was employed by "Single-speech" Hamilton, secretary to Halifax, Viceroy of Ireland, and spent a year with him at Dublin. Hamilton got him a small pension, but expected too much work of him, and in 1765 Burke threw up both his employment and his pension. With his brother and his kinsman, William Burke, he had begun speculations which promised him a competence. Through this kinsman he made the acquaintance of Rockingham, and when in 1765 Rockingham became Prime Minister, Burke was appointed his private secretary. For seventeen years the two were close friends, Burke strengthening the mind and purpose of Rockingham's party, and Rockingham supplying Burke with money and tactfully checking his faults.

Edmund Burke.

Burke had made many literary acquaintances, and in 1764 became an original

member of the "Club," and formed close friendships with Johnson, Reynolds, and Garrick. When in 1765 Lord Verney brought him into Parliament as member for Wendover, Johnson prophesied that he would be one of the first men in the country, and he at once made his mark in the House. Rockingham, dismissed after a year in office, desired Burke to serve under Grafton, but he chose to stick to his friend, and vindicated his Ministry in a vigorous pamphlet. Throughout he was in effect the leader of the opposition to the Grafton Ministry, assailing their policy on America, Wilkes, and the law of libel. In the last matter he was the originator of obstruction in the House of Commons.

When in 1770 North succeeded Grafton, Burke remained in active opposition, and from 1774 had the support of Fox. From 1774 to 1780 he sat for Bristol, fighting against the Ministry's policy on America and for the removal of the restrictions on Irish trade. The latter effort cost him his seat, but Rockingham had him returned for Malton. He had already attacked the jobbery of sinecure offices, and now again brought in a Bill for economic reform. Defeated at the moment, it led at length to the end of the system.

On Rockingham's return to office in 1782 Burke was made Paymaster of the Forces, but not offered Cabinet rank. This has been attributed to Whig exclusiveness, but the whole tone of the correspondence between Rockingham and Burke compels us to seek for another cause. In fact, Burke's temper had been ruined, partly by his financial difficulties, and he had become, as Rockingham knew and Fox said, an unmanageable colleague. Rockingham's death showed a rift in his party, and on Shelburne becoming Prime Minister Burke followed Fox into opposition. In office again for the few months of the Coalition Ministry, he was dismissed on the accession of Pitt.

Burke had long disliked our administration in India, and he distrusted Hastings, the Governor-General. His zeal was now stimulated by the malignant Francis, lately the colleague and opponent of Hastings. With Sheridan, Fox, and others he moved for an impeachment, and with the partial support of Pitt the motion was carried; and in the trial of Hastings, which lasted for seven years and ended in an acquittal, Burke was a manager. Though the charges against Hastings were exaggerated, the whole of Burke's speeches were a cry for justice to the natives of India.

Partly by his merits and partly by his faults Burke had lost all influence in the country when his action on the French Revolution suddenly made him "a sort of power in Europe." His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) ran through eleven editions in a twelvemonth. He broke with his Whig friends and worked hard for the French exiles, sending his son to Coblentz on their account. But in the hour of his greatest success he was a most unhappy man. He felt deeply his estrangement from his old friends and the acquittal of Hastings, and he believed that revolutionary principles would get the mastery in England. With health and temper broken he could not bear a word of remonstrance or advice. He retired from Parliament to make way for his tactless son, whom he idolized and idealized, and

the son died before he could take his seat. His only relief was the grant of two pensions, which enabled him to pay part of his debts. This freed him from anxiety concerning his wife, but he died full of fears for his country.

Characteristics. — Moral loftiness is the dominating note of Burke's character. He had a passion for justice and a genius for friendship. To the distressed he was as great a friend as Johnson. With all his intellect he was extremely emotional, and under the stress of troubles became at times violent, overbearing, arrogant, and intractable, though still cheerful and playful with those whom he loved. It was his unhappiness that he was unable to follow in his own affairs a path which he prescribed to his country as leading to content.

Although in a sense Burke abandoned literature for politics, his political writings and speeches are literature of the first rank. He seldom thinks merely of carrying his audience with him, but rather of elevating and exhausting the subject in hand. In his passion and his imagery he had in him much of the poet, and he wrote with a ragged copy of Virgil at his elbow. He failed in wit, though there is humour in some of his letters, and he was usually too indignant to be pathetic. For his prose style he studied Dryden's, and he owed something to the brilliance of Bolingbroke, whose character and theories were his detestation.

In politics Burke was essentially an aristocrat and a conservative. He so valued institutions that he sometimes seemed to forget the purpose for which they exist. Thus he desired freedom much but he desired order more. To palpable abuses he was an unremitting foe, though once under an emotional impulse he restored to office two clerks whom his predecessor had dismissed for fraud. To organic changes, whether forward or backward, he was equally opposed, no less to the reform of Parliament than to the resuscitation of the king's prerogative. For abstract rights he had nothing but contempt, while he emphasized duty and expediency, and might have said that in politics the two were the same. Men who take other views than his will still find his works to be storehouses of political wisdom; and Macaulay might well say that in politics his was "the greatest mind since Milton."

Works.—Of Burke's works, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) and *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756) are early ventures. *A Short Account of a Short Administration* ably defends Rockingham's Ministry. *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents* (1770) expounds Whig principles at their best, defending the constitutional equipoise, government by party, sound administration, and the interests of the people at large. The speeches on America (1774–8) show a complete comprehension of the position and of the inevitable consequences of the policy of Grenville, North, and the king. Other speeches of this period deal with Irish trade and economic reform. The speeches on Fox's East India Bill (1784) and on the Nabob of Arcot (1785) show how deeply Burke had studied our government in India.

The *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) is a piece of shining rhetoric, with much that is true and much that is false. Burke had visited France in 1773, been welcomed by Madame du Deffand, and seen the Dauphiness, Marie Antoinette, at Versailles. Of the condition of the people he saw nothing, and, unlike Chesterfield, had no foresight of the Revolution. He looked with horror upon its very beginnings, and in respectable Englishmen, like Priestley, who approved of it, he could see nothing but "wicked principles and bad hearts." Ignorant of its social origin he looked upon it as mere politics, and—here he showed astonishing prescience—predicted its inevitable course and even the military despotism which was to follow. But he was under the influence of the salons which he had seen, and Francis roused him to fury by describing as "pure foppery" a highly wrought passage contrasting the past splendour of the queen and her present woes, though in fact these had hardly begun. Of the miserable condition of the masses in France, as set forth, for instance, in Young's *Travels*, he had no knowledge. Burke, however, as was usual with him, rises above his immediate theme, and in preaching the gospel of order presents things which, if the world be wise, must always be taken into account, even though they do not comprehend the whole possibilities of political life and progress.

As the Revolution advanced Burke lost his head, and his later works are wilder and more rhetorical. They include the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (1791), *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies* (1793), *Thoughts on the Prospect of a Peace with the Regicide Directory* (1796), and others.

The *Speeches on the Impeachment of Hastings* appeared in 1792 and *A Letter to a Noble Lord* in 1796. The Duke of Bedford, a friend of the Revolution, had attacked Burke's pension, forgetting how much of his own riches came from state grants at the Reformation. Burke's reply is crushing.

Burke's life was a tragedy partly of his own making, partly due to the conditions of his age and to the strokes of fortune; but with all his faults he remains to posterity the noblest figure of his time.

HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD (1717–97)

Life.—Horace (christened Horatio) Walpole was the youngest son of Sir Robert, the Prime Minister and the first earl. Bred at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, he went in 1739 with his school friend, Gray the poet, to France and Italy. He was elected a member of Parliament before he returned, and he sat until 1767. In 1747 he rented and then bought a house at Twickenham called Strawberry Hill. This he gradually transformed into "a little Gothic castle" and filled with works of art and curiosities. From 1757 he had there a printing-press, of which the first issue was Gray's *Odes*. He thrice visited Paris, and became an intimate friend of Madame du Deffand. In his failing years he enjoyed the friendship of Mary and Agnes Berry, who survived him by more than half a century.

Works.—His chief works were *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England* (1758); *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, from Vertue (1762–71); *A Catalogue of Engravers born or residing in England* (1763); *The Castle of Otranto* (1764); *Historic Doubts on Richard III.* (1767); *The Mysterious Mother, a Tragedy* (1768). The following were published posthumously: *Reminiscences* (1805); *Memoirs of the Reign of George II.* (1822); *Memoirs of the Reign of George III.* (1845); *Journal of 1771–83* (1859). He also wrote prologues, essays, and many *jeux d'esprit* in prose and verse, but his greatest work was his *Letters*.

Horace Walpole.
(From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

Walpole was a man of quality, a wit, and a connoisseur. He has been called a fribble, a gentleman-usher at heart, and a spiteful gossip, but all this is unfair. He sat long in Parliament and strove for a return to his father's policy, of which he saw the merits if he was blind to its defects; he worked against the slave trade, and he fought hard to save Admiral Byng. He lived by offices that could be treated as sinecures, but he found fit men for the work and took care that the country was honestly served. Again, he was proud of his father for his statesmanship and his love of art; and he was well content to have as his maternal grandfather "an honest timber-merchant." His friends he chose not for their quality but for their qualities. Gray's mother was a milliner, Mann's father an army clothier, Ashton's an usher in an obscure school. Once again, to find malice in his *Letters* is to misunderstand them. His hatreds were mostly prompted by filial regard or even better reasons, and it was rather art than spite that barbed his pen.

It is true that Walpole thought too well of the fashionable writers of his age and not well enough of some others. He appreciated Gray, but thought nearly as well of Mason. His romantic turn of mind preferred "the extravagant beauties of Shakespeare and Milton . . . to the sober and correct march of Pope." He had no grip of history, but an intense interest in its persons and its material monuments. As an antiquary he was an amateur, but as a connoisseur he takes first rank.

The Castle of Otranto was published under a pseudonym and professed to be a translation from the Italian. Of all Walpole's many writings it is the only one which had a direct literary influence. It claimed to be "a Gothic romance," but, like the architecture of Strawberry Hill, was not genuinely mediæval. Its blend of the supernatural and the ordinary made it immediately popular, but to-day its chief interest is as the forerunner of a school which culminated in *Guy Mannering* and "Wandering Willie's Tale."

Walpole's writings on contemporary history are interesting and valuable as pictures of party politics and personages, but are by no means impartial. He had some political insight, and foresaw the issue of Grenville's policy towards America.

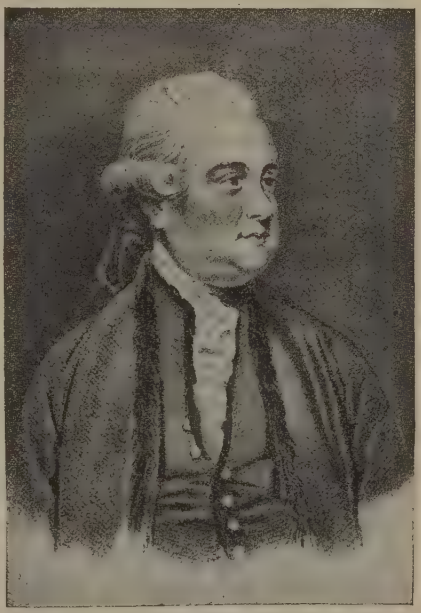
Walpole's chief correspondent was Sir Horace Mann (1701–86), his kinsman, who from 1737 to his death was British minister at the Court of Florence. Walpole renewed acquaintance with him in Italy, but the two never met after 1741. On his return to England Walpole saw that letters to Italy could serve for a picture of fashionable, political, and literary life, and for a permanent record of his own wit, whether pungent or playful, and of his power of description and illustration. To a voluntary exile he could write much that would not be news to any friend at home. It was his good fortune that Mann lived on for forty-five years without wishing to leave Florence. It was not mere fortune that, while he meant the letters for publication, and even in later life revised them, he never forgot that they were letters, and that he must write as one who spoke and not forget to whom he was speaking. For his themes he had the advantage of living in the worlds of party politics and fashionable diversions, and he made himself a place among men of letters. It is true that the great fleet of Johnson, Burke, and their friends appears only in the offing, for Walpole shared Gray's dislike of Johnson and Boswell, and that some of his swans are geese, but he makes his geese interesting. As for the alleged spite, it must be remembered that Walpole accounted life "a tragedy to those who feel and a comedy to those who think." He chose the comic theme, and viewed as comedy the letters are no more spiteful than *The School for Scandal* or *Mansfield Park*. Byron, himself a prince of letter-writers, called them "incomparable."

Among his other correspondents were Gray, a keen critic of his writings; William Cole (1714–82), a clergyman and antiquary; and Mason (1724–97), whose poems he flattered. There are also many letters to his cousin Conway (1721–95), the statesman and field-marshal, whom he loved all his life and over whose hesitating character he had much influence; to his school friend George Montagu (1718–80), who later sank into a hermit's life and ignored all his friends; to the charming Countess of Upper-Ossory (1737–1804), formerly Duchess of Grafton; and in his last years to Mary Berry (1763–1852).

Walpole's style is often ungrammatical, but never obscure. Occasionally he lapses into a French idiom, but his choice of words is usually admirable. He was no deep thinker, but his turn of mind sets him with Warton as a herald of the Romantic movement.

EDWARD GIBBON (1737–94)

Life.—The son of a man of means, who dissipated part of them, Gibbon was born at Putney. After two years at Westminster he left in ill-health, but with a strong taste for books. Recovering, he was sent in 1752, still under fifteen, to Magdalen College, Oxford. Here he wasted a year. He then became a Roman Catholic, whereupon he was removed to Lausanne, and there returned to Protestantism. He fell in love with Susanne Curchod, afterwards Madame Necker; when his father forbade the marriage he "sighed as a lover" but "obeyed as a son." In 1758, already a man of learning, he came home and joined the militia. In 1764 he travelled in Italy, and at Rome conceived the idea of his great work. In these years he gradually became a freethinker. Returning he made friends in London, worked at the history, joined the Literary Club, and entered Parliament. He thought less of politics than of his book, of which the first volume appeared in 1776 and made him famous. He worked on, first in London, and from 1783 at Lausanne, producing the last volume in 1788. Returning to visit his friend Holroyd, Lord Sheffield, he died almost suddenly of a neglected ailment. Besides *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* he wrote essays, journals, several drafts of an autobiography, and some historical studies.



Edward Gibbon.

Character.—A good son, friend, and master, Gibbon had little romance, and such passion as he had was controlled by a clear and logical intellect. His fidelity and equanimity went with an industry and accuracy beyond praise. His views were strictly intellectual. He had no mysticism or religious enthusiasm, and believed only that for which he could find an historical or logical basis. His philosophy is Voltaire's. As a record of political and military events Gibbon's *History* exhausts the period and cannot be superseded. Efforts to question his accuracy on facts have usually failed. It is true that in his account of the early Church his bias made him reject something more than the legends of a later period, but on facts this is his sole failure. The work, however, has both omissions and defects. It is too exclusively political. Gibbon was somewhat aware of the social side of history and supplies material

for studying it, but he does not interrupt his narrative to give the social causes of the Empire's fall. So in other matters, though he had the power of synthesis, he does not hold it an historian's duty to use it. It may be, too, that he has an inadequate sense of the relation between historical causes and events. The *Memoirs* as originally published were compiled by Sheffield from six drafts. The drafts have since been printed and have much interest.

Style.—Gibbon's style is always stately, at times almost pompous, neither varying with its subjects nor suggesting more than it says. With all its majesty, it never fails in clearness or rapidity or force. Nor should it offend us that the sentence often ends with a prepositional phrase.

GILBERT WHITE (1720–93)

Life.—Sprung of a family long settled at Oxford, White was the eldest of the six sons of John White, a barrister, and was born in his grandfather's vicarage at Selborne, in Hampshire. His early years were spent at Compton, in Surrey, but before he was ten his father went to live at Selborne in a house known as The Wakes. He was educated at Basingstoke Grammar School and at Oriel College, Oxford, of which he became a fellow in 1744. Ordained in 1747, he acted as curate to his aunt's husband, Charles White, at Swarraton, some twelve miles from Selborne, though most of his time was given to Selborne and Oxford. In 1751 he was curate to his grandfather's successor at Selborne, but next year returned to Oxford to be dean of his college and junior proctor. In 1757 his college presented him to a living which he kept for life without residing on it. His father died in 1758, and in 1763 he became by inheritance from his aunt owner of the house in which he lived. Thenceforward he added to a slender income by serving curacies in the neighbourhood, while he found good shooting and opportunities for work as a field naturalist. He paid regular visits to London and made friendships with naturalists and antiquaries, in particular with Thomas Pennant, whom he helped in the second edition of *British Zoology*, and with Daines Barrington. From 1775 to 1788 he was occupied in writing his chief work, the antiquarian part of it demanding frequent visits to Oxford, where he was helped by Richard Chandler. Its publication brought him a correspondence with Robert Marsham of Norfolk, a naturalist of established repute. White was a man of strong family affection, but he never married. He died at Selborne and was buried there.

Works.—*The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* appeared in 1788. White's other works are a few papers on natural history, letters to his brother John and other relatives, to Ralph Churton, and to Marsham. A few attempts at verse and a few sermons also survive. The manuscripts of his *Garden Kalendar* and *Naturalist's Journal* are in the British Museum, but only some passages of the former have been published.

Character. — White was an attractive man of equal refinement and simplicity. In general intercourse he had some outward formality, but with his relatives, with his parishioners, and with children this disappeared. He had a pretty gift of humour and a surpassing power of observation. If he never resided on his living, he at least supplied it with capable curates, and he performed his own duties as a curate without either the supineness sometimes found in his day or the fussiness of another time.

White's *Selborne* is the great classic of the field naturalists. In appending the "Antiquities" he followed a custom which was already passing away, for he himself had no special qualification for the work. The "Natural History" is based upon letters, of which the earlier ones were not written for publication, and it keeps the epistolary form throughout. Its most obvious merit is the very close observation of habits and structure, and its worst error is the belief in the hibernation of swallows. He seems to have been the first Englishman to notice the peculiarities which made Scopoli separate the swift from the class of the swallow, and probably it was really White and not Pennant, as White implies, that first saw the house-dove to be sprung from the rock-pigeon. But even such originality and the clear records of habit which appear on every page are insufficient to explain the special charm of the book. It creates an atmosphere, and the reader follows as though he himself were present at the observation. The book, which by its structure escapes formal classifications, shows how much may be studied within a small range of ground. The speculations, too, on cause and effect are apt to prompt like speculations in the reader. But perhaps the greatest charm of all is that the book is entirely void of pretence. The original edition (1788) consists of letters dated from 1767 to 1787, with a few prefatory letters which are such only in name, as are the letters in the "Antiquities." It has passed through innumerable editions. That of Thomas Bell (1877) adds in the second volume the rest of White's published works, the chief being the letters to his brother, John White, to Churton, and to Marsham.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—JOHNSON, SAMUEL: *Works*, ed. A. Murphy (12 vols., 1796; new ed., 1810, o.p.); ed. A. Chalmers (12 vols., 1806, o.p.); *Wit and Wisdom*, selected by G. B. Hill (Oxford University Press, 1888); *Rasselas*, ed. G. B. Hill (Clarendon Press, 1887); *Letters*, ed. G. B. Hill (2 vols., Clarendon Press, 1902; *Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill (3 vols., Clarendon Press, 1905, o.p.).—GOLDSMITH, OLIVER: *Works*, ed. J. W. M. Gibbs (5 vols., Bell, 1884–6).—BURKE, EDMUND: *Works* (6 vols., Bell, 1854–5; new ed., 1893–4); *Selections*, ed. E. J. Payne (3 vols., Clarendon Press, 1874–8).—WALPOLE, HORACE: *Letters*, ed. P. Cunningham (7 vols., Murray, 1854); ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee (16 vols., Clarendon Press, 1903–18).—GIBBON, EDWARD: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury (7 vols., Methuen, 1896–1900; new ed., 1909–13); *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. Lord Sheffield (5 vols., 1814, o.p.).

Studies.—BOSWELL, J.: *Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill (6 vols., Clarendon Press, 1887).—PIOZZI, Mrs.: *Anecdotes of Johnson* (2 vols., Clarendon Press, 1897).—STEPHEN, Sir L.: *Johnson* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1878).—RALEIGH, Sir W.: *Johnson* (Frowde, 1910); Carlyle's review (in his *Collected Works*).—BLACK, W.: *Goldsmith* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1878).—MORLEY, Lord: *Burke* (Macmillan, 1867).—DOBSON, A.: *Walpole* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1893).—MORISON, J. COTTER: *Gibbon* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1880).

Chapter 9. THE DRAMA

The end of Restoration Drama—Attempts at revival—Garrick's reforms in the Theatre —Goldsmith's and Sheridan's Comedies—Decline of the Drama

A dramatist or playwright is an artist who creates an impression through the words, movements and grouping of his actors, aided by some degree of scenic effect. Thus a stage production is a collaboration in which any one class of contributor may predominate. The dramatist's share becomes literature only when his work appears in book form and succeeds in appealing to his readers' emotions without the help of his collaborators. But as the drama is the most complex and expensive form of art, it depends for its very existence on another factor—the immediate and complete patronage of the public. Hence the writing of plays is more influenced by social, financial, and administrative considerations than any other kind of literature, and unless all these conditions are borne in mind its development cannot be properly appreciated.

The End of Restoration Drama.—Soon after the accession of William and Mary and the triumph of the Puritan middle class, the fatal weakness of the drama became manifest. It had ceased to be national. Despite its brilliance under the Stuarts, the vast majority of Londoners cared neither for its tone nor its outlook, and their hostility found expression in Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1697). Collier raised a controversy and won his case because both the facts and public opinion were on his side, and yet the pamphlet represents a triumph of the old over the new. It produced ample proof that the Restoration stage encouraged vice and ridiculed the Church ; it backed its censure with innumerable quotations from the classics and from patristic literature ; in the spirit of the 17th century it overwhelmed abuses with erudition ; but it proposed abolition and not reform. Yet if the stage deserved chastening it needed guidance much more. As many plays ran for only two or three afternoons, and as very few ran for over a fortnight, the repertoire had to be enormous. Since at least two theatres were in competition, and sometimes as many as three or four, the rival managers could not afford to neglect any form of entertainment which would fill their houses. If flippancy and immorality were to be excised, something else must be put in their place. Otherwise there was an irresistible temptation either to continue the production of operatic spectacles or to rely solely on actors whose talent gave value to worthless compositions and novelty to revivals. Congreve continued to write till 1700, Vanbrugh and Farquhar till 1707, but the age of Restoration comedy had ended and the theatres had not moved with the times. There was needed a fresh school of dramatists who could learn to put the new spirit on to the stage ; otherwise

one of the greatest of English literary crafts would maintain its popularity only by degenerating into ballet and pantomime.

The New School of Playwrights.—This rebirth of the drama might easily have been accomplished. The town regarded the houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Drury Lane, the Haymarket, and Covent Garden, as most valued institutions, and the career of a dramatist offered prizes beyond the reach of poets and pamphleteers. But, unhappily, the playwrights of the period were too full of the new gospel of refinement and morality, and were too prejudiced against the old drama of incident and of intrigue, to combine the two. They did not merely subordinate character to the plot, they sacrificed both to the actor's personality or to the requirements of a lay sermon.

Moral Reformers.—Colley Cibber set the example by introducing a moral tone into his comedies ; but his heart was with the actors, not with the tragedy and comedy of the outside world, which they should help to portray. Steele was equally anxious to play the moralist, had far more literary sense, genuine insight into character, and sympathy with his fellow-creatures, but he never realized the limitations of the stage. He tried to create pathos without the humour which is its indispensable foil. He endeavoured to move his audiences to tears in the interest of virtue and of morality, but he could not make the situations convincing. Mrs. Centlivre collaborated more effectively with the actors, and created many comic situations in which they could shine, but she never attempted to reflect the spirit of her age, often contenting herself with adaptations from Molière or from the Spaniards.

Tragedy.—Tragedians were hardly more successful. Nicholas Rowe produced in *The Fair Penitent* (1703) and in *Jane Shore* (1704) two pieces full of smooth and refined verse. The tragedies were well received, partly because they advocated the strictest reverence for lawful wedlock, but chiefly because each gave an attractive actress full scope to pose and to declaim. Addison's *Cato* (produced 1713) was really an academic essay in Greek tragedy, four acts of which were probably composed as early as 1703. It is faultless in construction but uninspired, and it enjoyed an unprecedented vogue only because party spirit ran high at the time of its production and both Whigs and Tories insisted on reading their own watchwords into its aphorisms. Edward Young's, John Hughes's, and James Thomson's work betrayed the same qualities : efficiency of versification, academic rectitude of sentiment, and lack of that passionate and complex vitality out of which true tragedy is made. Many situations in their plays are full of dramatic possibilities but end by producing only rhetoric, as if the Augustan age had staked on art its hopes of culture and shrank from nature as from a disturbing influence.

George Lillo.—Even Lillo's domestic tragedies are not really exceptions. The story of *The London Merchant* (1731), how a 'prentice becomes so infatuated by a

courtesan that he descends first to theft and then to murder, might well have developed into a great psychological drama. It would have been all the more effective because the characters are taken from common life. Yet, though the play drew floods of tears from its audiences, and inspired imitators in France and in Germany, as well as in England, the situations develop into little else than illustrations for a homily. Lillo's best drama, *The Fatal Curiosity* (1736), misses the dignity of tragedy despite its vigorous Elizabethan verse, and has to thank Shakespeare for its most effective touches; while if Edward Moore in *The Gamester* (1753) has created something of dramatic suspense in the struggle between Lewson and Stukeley for the miserable Beverley and his devoted womenfolk, all verisimilitude is ultimately sacrificed to the awful warning against gambling. Again and again managers had to depend on adaptations from Shakespeare or on translations from Voltaire, or on pantomime and Italian opera, and on other productions of spectacular and topical interest.

Gay's "Beggar's Opera."—In 1728 Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, "a Newgate pastoral," took possession of the stage with its charming songs and its touches of whimsical humour, and in the "thirties" Fielding's and Carey's farces attracted full houses, because they parodied fustian tragedies and libelled public characters, till the Licensing Act of 1737 limited the theatres to two and submitted all plays to censorship.

Garrick's Theatrical Reforms.—It is significant of the state of the drama that an actor should at this juncture have exercised the chief influence on its development. If public opinion expected the playwright to moralize, the old-fashioned actor required him to compose rhetoric. By 1746 Garrick had convinced theatre-goers that facial expression and rapid, descriptive gestures were more effective than declamation. Garrick was not successful with the noble lines of Johnson's *Irene* (1749), because the play has no action and little emotion; but he found complete freedom in the rapid movement and conflicting passions of the Elizabethan drama. But he was far more than a great reviver of Shakespeare. In 1771 he enlisted the services of De Loutherbourg, one of the first Continental stage artists to work at the relation between costume and scenery. By introducing French decoration, by clearing the stage of spectators, so that the actors were now viewed from one side only, like figures in a picture, but above all by his own example, he restored action to the theatre. Such reforms did not exclude stage hack-writers like Arthur Murphy (1727–1805), nor producers of sheer farce like Samuel Foote (1720–77), nor composers of light opera such as Isaac Bickerstaff and John O'Keefe. Nor did Garrick restore the tragic muse to an age which was already absorbed in sentimentality and the analysis of emotions. But playwrights were now free to translate their ideas into dialogue and incident, without which the dramatic art cannot live.

Sentimental Comedy.—The effect of this enlargement was soon felt. Home, as late as the "fifties," wasted his undeniably romantic sense of pathos and fatality in

Douglas (Edinburgh, 1756; London, 1757) because he was still cramped by the ideal of static actors declaiming mellifluous verse. But Hannah More's *Percy* (1777), though equally artificial and more introspective, finds an outlet for all emotional intensity in tragic action. In comedy, George Colman's *Polly Honeycombe* (1760), *The Jealous Wife* (1761), and *The Clandestine Marriage* (1768) recalled something of the old English comic spirit without sacrificing the new English respect for morality; while *The Brothers* (1769), *The West Indian* (1771), and *The Fashionable Lover* (1772) by Cumberland, established sentimental comedy. We enter a genteel stage world in which masculine virtue or feminine delicacy becomes the victim of some nefarious conspiracy. We enjoy the luxury of experiencing sympathetic but well-bred indignation till the fifth act, and then the heroine and the hero triumph through sheer merit, aided by a lucky turn of fortune. In so artificial a reconstruction of life, the characterization is bound to be conventional and the plot melodramatic. And yet Kelly, Cumberland and his followers Burgoyne, Holcroft, Mrs. Inchbald, and Colman the younger, had a sounder sense of the stage and a less jaundiced view of society than Lillo, Moore, Rowe, and Home had displayed. They believed in the fundamental goodness of human nature and in the rapid development of stage plots, and their school held the public for half a century and survived the opposition of Goldsmith and of Sheridan.

Goldsmith's Plays.—Goldsmith maintained that if the virtues of private life are commendable, its follies are much more amusing, and that though the distresses of individuals may grace a novel, their faults are more suitable to the theatre. So he set himself to create a number of stage situations in which the eccentricities and foibles of ordinary people should appear in the most laughable light. But though he had the keenest sense of humour, he never really mastered the art of constructing a plot. In *The Good-Natur'd Man* (1768) the plot is not only confused but is so full of make-believe that it is hard to enter into its spirit; while the two genuinely comic creations—Croker the testy hypochondriac and Lofty the pretended "man with a pull"—are really accidents in its development. In *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) Goldsmith very nearly produced a masterpiece. The postulate that two London gentlemen travelling into the country to meet their *fiancées* could lodge at their destination under the impression that it was an inn, and that the daughter of the house, finding her unsuspecting suitor hopelessly shy with ladies of his own class, should pretend to be the barmaid in order to win his heart—is at any rate sufficiently plausible for old English comedy. The situation once granted, the characters lend themselves admirably to the complications which ensue. Even so, the dramatic qualities of the piece would not have secured its immortality without the charm of Goldsmith's touch. The *dramatis personæ* are conceived with an artlessness which raises them above the prosaic world of our resentments and animosities. Mr. Hardcastle's simple courtesy and unaffected egoism, his wife's naïve vanity and fits of temper, move laughter without contempt; and if Marlow's alternations

between timidity and self-assurance are overdrawn, Tony Lumpkin, with his peasant's cunning and his revolt against the maternal tutelage which he has outgrown, is a remarkable and convincing study of reversion to type.

Sheridan's Comedies.—Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816) had less sympathy with human nature; he lacked insight into the normal traits of character that appear particularly humorous in abnormal circumstances. But he displays a far deeper insight into society and a greater mastery of stage technique. His province was the artificial character superimposed on life by Georgian drawing-rooms; and as the profounder idiosyncrasies of human nature could hardly emerge in so conventional an atmosphere, he created the *vis comica* out of brilliant dialogue and dramatic irony. In *The Rivals* (1775) he still depends upon the stock characters of Latin and French comedy—the irate parent, the rebellious and enamoured son, the servants who minister to their master's and mistress's intrigues—but he does not pit them against each other in the old way. He starts them working for the same end by counter-means, and lets the audience watch them unwittingly frustrate their own plans and betray their own self-conceit and affectation till the *dénouement* satisfies their cross-purposes and restores them to their normal state of self-possession. Sheridan produced nothing to be compared to this first effort till the last great English comedy was acted in 1777. *The School for Scandal* is a brilliant compromise between the new sentimental drama and the old English comedy of manners. The play opens amid a well-to-do demi-monde of damaged reputations and ill-assorted marriages, a set which, while sacrificing sincerity and happiness, has saved the art of conversation. As the play progresses, we discover that some characters—notably Lady Teazle and Charles Surface—are being betrayed into this vicious and extravagant circle by their youth and their inexperience. Just before they succumb to their temptations, a skilfully contrived crisis touches some finer chord in their natures and saves them from taking the irretrievable step. Such a conception at such a period of dramatic history is brilliant enough, but the workmanship is even more remarkable. Though the fate of no less than five people is at stake, their destinies touch each other throughout

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.
(British Museum.)

the action, and unite in the climax of the celebrated "screen scene"; a situation all the more dramatic because the audience realizes its significance more fully than the characters can. Yet there is nothing mawkish in the play. The dialogue all through is a triumph of epigrammatic felicity, and the satire is that of an accomplished man of the world.

Decline of the Drama.—Except Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1781) and Burgoyne's *The Heiress* (1786), hardly a play in the following decades deserves to rank as literature. Even Sheridan's *The Critic* (1779), though infinitely witty, is scarcely more than a parody. Many reasons have been assigned for this decadence, from which the theatre has not yet fully recovered. Amongst other causes we may mention the deterioration of the audiences. The revival of the Evangelical movement and the ever-growing influence of Wesleyanism kept many of the more thoughtful from the theatre. A change in the fashionable dining hour thinned the attendance of the upper classes. In the new Drury Lane, opened in 1794, the two-shilling gallery was raised up to the roof, so that the most appreciative part of the audience —the bourgeois critics—could neither see nor hear properly, while the whole auditorium was so vast that actors had to cultivate a coarser, more emphatic style. Thus the only improvements that we hear of are connected with the staging. After 1775 authoritative books of costumes were published. John Kemble began to introduce historical accuracy, especially in Roman dress, and his lead was followed by Charles Kemble, assisted by Planché. Such conditions were bound to react on the men who wrote for the theatre. But the most damaging influence of the time was the growing popularity of the novel, which attracted the energies of wits and humorists.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—GOLDSMITH, O.: *Plays*, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ed. C. E. Doble and G. Ostler (Oxford ed., Clarendon Press, 1909).—SHERIDAN, R. B.: *Dramatic Works* (Oxford ed., Clarendon Press, 1906); *Major Dramas*, ed. G. H. Nettleton (Ginn, 1906).

Studies.—DOBSON, A.: *Goldsmith* (Great Writers, W. Scott, 1888).—FORSTER, J.: *Goldsmith* (1844, final ed. 1877).—SICHEL, W.: *Sheridan* (2 vols., Constable, 1909).

Chapter 10. LATER NOVELS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Successors of Richardson, Fielding, and Sterne—Goldsmith, Fanny Burney, etc.—The Gothic Romance: Mrs. Radcliffe and other Novelists—Didactic and Propagandist Novels: *Rasselas, The Fool of Quality;* Godwin, Bage, Holcroft, Day, Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Opie

THE NOVEL AFTER FIELDING

The idea of intellectual realism appropriate to the positivist spirit of the 18th century was most completely fulfilled in *Tom Jones,* in which Fielding undertook to mirror life faithfully, and to resolve certain problems of conduct, and justified even his satirical exaggeration of vices and follies on the rational ground of the writer's duty to society. Fiction such as this could not be improved upon as a vehicle for the thought and sentiment of the 18th-century humanist; and there was accordingly no deep change in the constitution of the novel until the new birth of poetry sent vibrations through the entire realm of literature. The union of art and logic, of creative imagination and analytical reflection, developed in no way from Fielding to Thackeray, though the novel fell into the hands of theorists like Godwin, Bage, and Holcroft, who made questionable use of it to expound and illustrate revolutionary dogmas.

Putting aside the romanticists, we find that most of the novelists in the generation after Fielding fall automatically into two groups, both of whom regard themselves as faithful chroniclers of what they see and honest critics of things as they are. The one group deals in entertaining pictures of manners, or satire of a harsher strain. The other is composed of didactic writers, social speculators, or propagandists, all freely employing the novel for purposes outside art, and thus evincing how fully it had now become accepted as a natural history of humanity, grounded on accurate inductions and affording a valid basis for deductive theory.

THE SUCCESSORS OF RICHARDSON, FIELDING, AND STERNE

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–74).—While Smollett employed an exaggerated realism to barb his satire, his contemporary Goldsmith softened lines and toned down harsh colours, until we seem to see the lights and shades of reality through a mellow sunset haze. *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) appeared in the decade between Smollett's ugliest distortion of life, *Ferdinand, Count Fathom,* and *Humphry Clinker,* his kindlier masterpiece.

"The Citizen of the World" (1762).—Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* is an essay in the supposed Oriental manner then in vogue, consisting of letters from a Chinese

philosopher studying Western society in London to his friend at home. Sketches of the various aspects of London life, in coffee-tavern, drawing-room, the streets, and places of public entertainment, are connected, as in the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, by the mere suggestion of a story. The social critic handles manners, literature, art, the theatre, politics, and religious differences much in the fashion of Montesquieu in his *Lettres Persanes*. Interludes in dialogue enliven the graver commentary, along with the humours of some originals drawn from life, like the Man in Black, who may be a fancy portrait of Goldsmith himself, and the more satirical Beau Tibbs. The Chinese philosopher is little more than an attitude, and from the ethnic point of view is incorrectly drawn.

"The Vicar of Wakefield."—He wrote these letters to order for a commercial magazine; *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) he wrote to please himself, and put into it the reveries of years. It combines the arcadian longings which Goldsmith had expressed more fancifully in *The Deserted Village* with the drollery that afterwards found vent in his sprightly comedies *The Good-Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Macaulay declared that the "Sweet Auburn" of the poem was a misguided attempt to combine the attractions of an English village with the affecting vicissitudes that dog Irish improvidence. Goldsmith made no similar mistake, at any rate, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, the classical picture of English country life in all its sweetness and charm. Such untruth as there is lies in the plot, on which, as merely the prescribed pattern that made a novel saleable, Goldsmith bestowed least thought. The plot is conventional and ultra-romantic. Troubles are heaped, to an unheard-of excess, on the blameless vicar; and then, in defiance of all laws of probability, turned at a stroke to rejoicing. That the characters are idealized is quite another matter, since they had their birth out of the fullness of the writer's heart. How a happy-go-lucky nomad like Goldsmith, who even when most prosperous never knew what it was to have a home, came to depict the idyllic life of the vicar and his enchanting family, seems at first sight a contradiction, but on second thoughts the most natural thing in the world. It was the poetry of unsatisfied longing, and not more unaccountable than that the humdrum Richardson should create such a winged being as Clarissa.

In a book like this, the mundane fortunes of the characters are a negligible quantity. What enthralls is the traits of personality that give fragrance to the story. One main element of the atmosphere is Goldsmith's creed of mercy and hope. It is not a profound philosophy, only an emanation of Goldsmith's brave and kindly temperament, which ever looked on the bright side and ignored the harsher teachings of experience. His disposition was too amiable and forgiving for either satire or unmitigated realism. He kept to the dramatic scheme of comedy and the apt alternation of narrative with lifelike dialogue. But there is more of spontaneous nature and less of the intellectual groundwork of art than in *Tom Jones*, though the vicar's family resemblance to Parson Adams recalls Fielding's earlier tale. The idyllic characters and the romantic incidents are not incongruous with the

vicar's simple affectation of worldly wisdom and the sarcastic common-sense of Mr. Burchell, checking the vanities and pretentious day-dreams of Mrs. Primrose and her daughter with his sententious "Fudge!" Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, turned again into a prose pastoral and reduced to the modest environment of an English village, with its blending of poetry and realism, humour and philosophic reverie, would be the very counterpart of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

FANNY BURNEY (1752–1840).—Frances Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay, is a link between Fielding and Miss Ferrier, Galt, and other satirists of manners in the 19th century. Smollett's brutal bludgeoning had been imitated in artless farragoes of factitious history by such cross-grained critics as Johnstone, the author of *Chrysal, or The Adventures of a Guinea*. Similar libels were *The Adventures of a Black Coat* (1760), *The History of Pompey the Little, or The Life and Adventures of a Lap-dog* (1751), *Memoirs of a Flea* (1785). Miss Burney's novels, and still more her familiar letters, are far more artistic examples of comic realism, though of a narrow orbit compared with Fielding's ample sweep.

"Evelina."—*Evelina* (1778) was perhaps suggested by *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), the most tolerable work of Mrs. Eliza Haywood, who earlier in the century had written novels of intrigue and contemporary scandal in the manner of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley. *Evelina* tells the story of a girl's entry into the world; the misadventures due to inexperience and the interfering ways of her relatives, whose meanness and vulgarity fill her with resentment and the reader with joy. It is told for the most part in Evelina's own letters. The plot is elementary. Affected creatures like the Branghton family with their sham quality airs, fine ladies, rakes and would-be rakes, fortune-hunters and husband-hunters, typify the more obvious absurdities of the fashionable world and those outside it. Both this and *Cecilia* are delightful in their lively picturing of domestic scenes, and of society as seen in drawing-room and ballroom, at the playhouse, and at Vauxhall and Ranelagh.

"Cecilia."—Her second novel, *Cecilia, or the Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), is a more complicated story. The comedy of manners tends to be subsidiary to more elaborate portraiture of character and the diverse interests of a melodramatic plot, which had some real pathos and hints of real tragedy. Miss Burney's experience was limited, but she kept prudently, as a rule, to her own familiar sphere, and came to grief only when she attempted a more ambitious novel in a third and a fourth venture, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, which were pompous failures.

THE GOTHIC ROMANCE

Beginnings of Romanticism.—It has been shown elsewhere that the Romantic revival began, more or less obscurely, at an early date in the 18th century. In essence, the movement was a revolt from the "didactic materialism" and the "bastard

classicism" of the last two centuries, when the canons holding authority were "Convention and Artifice, instead of Nature and Art." In considering the effect upon fiction it is necessary to notice that there were two tendencies at work, a harking back to older ideals, which we may roughly describe as mediævalism, and the deeper and more momentous impulse that we summarily label as "The Return to Nature." Mediævalism produced *The Castle of Otranto*, the early historical romances, Chatterton's and other imitations of ballads and metrical romances; and eventually inspired the splendid scene-painting, the heroic adventure, and the romantic reconstruction of bygone characters, manners, and historical episodes, in the novels of Scott, Dumas, and a great army of romancers down to Blackmore, Stevenson, Stanley Weyman, and Maurice Hewlett. The other impulse did more than produce a new fashion of novel: it has affected in a radical way every novel written since, for its most far-reaching effect was upon the development of realism.

Horace Walpole's Gallery at Strawberry Hill.

Historical Romance.—Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier* is less fiction than fraudulent history, being published as veracious memoirs. Different in every respect were the historical romances that began to appear when Richard Hurd and the Wartons were reviving an interest in mediæval literature and antiquities, followed soon by Bishop Percy and other collectors of ballads and romances, and the antiquaries Gough, Hearne, and Grose. *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury*, which came out in 1762, the year of Macpherson's *Ossian*, is supposed to be the work of the Rev. Thomas Leland, author of a *History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II.* This was a "Waverley novel" in the germ, poor in execution, but not without promise in its crude sketches of dramatic scenes from the age of feudalism.

Walpole's "Castle of Otranto."—Really an epoch-making event, however, was the publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1776), which is likewise historical in framework, though its essence is extravagant sensation and the artificial horrors

which were to be the keynote of Gothic romance. The scene is Italy in the 12th or 13th century; and Manfred, a tyrannical baron, his ill-used wife and beautiful daughter, with a gigantic apparition that haunts the castle, are the puppets of a stilted tragedy. While others essayed historical romance as an outlet for antiquarian zeal, Walpole sought a pseudo-historical stage for the sake of strangeness and freedom of invention. Clara Reeve, whose *Old English Baron* was published under its first title, *The Champion of Virtue, a Gothic Story*, in 1777, remonstrated against his licence, and, trying to give a correct picture of the Middle Ages, only contrived to copy the manners of her own day and put them in an antique frame.

Other Historical Romances.—The genre has always been a favourite hobby of women novelists. Miss Sophia Lee produced an embryo *Kenilworth* in *The Recess* (1783–6), the heroine of which is an imaginary daughter of Mary Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk. In 1793 Clara Reeve compiled a *Roger de Clarendon* out of Smollett's *History of England*, stiffened with material from Froissart and Holinshed. Jane Porter did much better work, and her *Scottish Chiefs* (1810) almost warranted her fancying herself a precursor of Scott. This romance of Wallace and Bruce is much superior to her sentimental idyll *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803), which is not really historical. She had caught a spark of the epical temper from reading Blind Harry and Barbour's *Bruce*, and her acquaintance with the localities helped her to be picturesque. A meritorious journeyman in the trade of semi-historical romancing was a certain James White, who wrote *Earl Strongbow, or the History of Richard de Clare and the Beautiful Geralda* (1789), *The Adventures of John of Gaunt* (1790), and *The Adventures of Richard Cœur de Lion* (1791), narratives that hardly fulfil the promise of accurate information conveyed by their titles. Joseph Strutt, the antiquary, on the other hand, was over-conscientious in his erudite novel *Queenhoo Hall*, illustrating the manners and customs of Henry VI.'s time, which Scott thought worth finishing after the author's death and published in 1808.

MRS. RADCLIFFE (1764–1823).—This stage in the revival of romance is identified with the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), the picturesque *Romance of the Forest* (1791), the more celebrated *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797), the most impressive, in which the demoniac villain Schedoni plays his part. Historical they are only in a negative sense. Whether she dates her stories in the age of chivalry or the days of the Inquisition, it is always the manners of her own time that are reproduced. In the 18th century, Romans, ancient Britons, knightly barons, and Highland chiefs came on the stage in knee-breeches and powdered wig; and similarly, one cheap conventional tint served for local colour in fiction, whatever the epoch depicted. Her first novel—a story of clan revenge—transported the courtly society and stately decorum of chivalry to a savage environment in the far northern Highlands.

Characteristics.—She was a thoroughgoing romancer, whose main endeavour was

to fabricate an exciting plot, with scenery in proper keeping, a poetical heroine cruelly oppressed, and a villain shedding a sinister, mysterious, and at the same time an enthralling effluence. The groans and skeletons and mysterious veils which frightened Mrs. Radcliffe's readers seem childish to those case-hardened by the psychic effects of later novelists. What is finest in her novels, and of the essence of her romanticism, is the harmony of the scenic accompaniment with the feelings evoked by the story, idyllic, grandiose, mysterious, or solemn. There was nothing grotesque in her romancing, as there was in the superhuman carpentry of *Otranto*. She is extremely serious in her invocation of the magic atmosphere—too serious indeed, for a gleam of humour would have saved the disillusionment of her explanatory sequels. And the emotional, cadenced prose of the more elevated passages, in which she yields herself to the beauty or sublimity conjured up from the depths of imagination—for she had never yet beheld the Alpine, Italian, or Pyrenean landscapes so enthusiastically pictured—blend story, scenery, and sentiment into an impressive symphony. The realists had been sparing of such colour ; their stages were scantily furnished for the play, which represented people's concerns with each other and not with their surroundings. It was here that Mrs. Radcliffe was most influential as an innovator. She had a vague love of mountains, waterfalls, forests, vast waters, gloomy sunsets, sad and pensive evenings. Her pages are sprinkled with adjectives like " stupendous," " magnificent," " sublime," " melancholy "—epithets that convey the effects of the impressive rather than the causes.

In piling up effects of pure terror, Mrs. Radcliffe was far surpassed by certain novelists who made this their sole object. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1782), a brilliant medley of Oriental magic and Western comedy, is a link between the Gothic tale of terror and the fashionable cult of Arabian fable, of which the monuments were Galland's *Arabian Nights*, Count Hamilton's sarcastic mimicries of Eastern extravagance, and the fables of Voltaire. The grim, the grotesque, and the sublime are embodied in turn in the fantastic Sultan, his insatiable mother, the atrocious crimes of the Mephistophelean Giaour, and the torments of the Hall of Eblis. Though Croly's story of the Wandering Jew, *Salathiel the Immortal* (1827), and Moore's *Alciphron* (1827) also grafted Oriental fantasy on to Gothic story, the later products of the school were as a rule simple enough in aim, which was to inflict the most violent shocks upon our most elementary feelings. This was the modest aim of Matthew Gregory Lewis's egregious *Monk* (1795), a coarse melodrama in which, in spite of some well-engineered scenes, horror turns to sickening disgust. The finest in workmanship, Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), displays imagination of a lurid, horrible, and perhaps a morbid kind—but at any rate imagination, and not mere mechanical exaggeration of repulsive effects. Both are stories of superhuman villainy abetted by compacts with the Evil One, but only in Maturin's does any subtlety in the use of suggestion impart a thrill. In Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), though, granted the data, the superstructure is admirably done, sheer horror staggers the mind and lets probability go.

DIDACTIC AND PROPAGANDIST FICTION

"Rasselas."—Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759) stands apart from the theoretic and propagandist novels that were so abundant in the half-century after Fielding. Those are more or less pretentiously based on fact, professing to show the cogency of a new theory of life by comparing things as they are with things as they might be. *Rasselas* is a lay sermon on "the Vanity of Human Wishes," the last and gravest of those meditations on human destiny in which the periodical writers loved to indulge. It is the direct successor of *Euphues*, the moral treatise in the outward guise of a novel; but it goes far deeper into human concerns, for it deals with eternal as well as temporal issues.

The Influence of Rousseau.—All the numerous revolutionary novels of this period were influenced directly or indirectly by the teaching and the artistic performance of Rousseau. In other words, they are first of all novels of theory, and secondly, novels of sentiment. They accept and almost caricature the scientific basis of realism, and at the same time proclaim the advent of romantic impulses. Writers found the public ready to accept the novel as a warrantable account of things as they are, affording grounds for comparison and speculation, and so made it a vehicle for promulgating ideas on the future of society. Theorists like Holcroft, Bage, Godwin, and Mrs. Opie found the persuasive force of sentiment still more compelling. The emotional appeal of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) had been of much greater potency than his intellectual criticism of social conventions and his utopian eulogy of the natural man. That was the infection that carried his teaching all over Europe, and made his book one of the fiery brands that kindled revolution.

Brooke's "Fool of Quality."—One of Rousseau's disciples, the Irishman Henry Brooke, gave the first English example of the pedagogic novel. *The Fool of Quality* (1766–70) is a curious hotch-potch of a story, describing the childhood and education of an ideal nobleman, digressing into comprehensive denunciations of existing things and humanitarian dreams of the future, and floundering at last into a melodramatic apportionment of rewards and penalties as childish as anything in the novels of Mrs. Behn or Mrs. Haywood. A more unequal book was never written. Reading it to-day, one marvels at the advanced ideas of this crotchety reformer on moral education, social economy, politics, religion, æsthetics, and most other topics, many of which, however, must be credited to Rousseau. But what captured John Wesley and Charles Kingsley was the contagious fervour of Brooke's moral tirades, and the flashes of insight lighting up his drawing of character and his fitful and uncertain review of the world. His was the best picture of boyhood in our literature prior to *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. The passionate and tearful sensibility, an ebullition of Brooke's Celtic temperament, made the more extravagant scenes ridiculous, but gave a noble pathos to the moral apologues and anecdotes of heroism which fed

the young spirit of the Fool of Quality. At times he achieved a nobility of diction quite different from the stilted declamation and ratiocination of his so-called poetry.[1]

"Sandford and Merton."—Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton* (1783–9) is a technical example of the pedagogic novel. Day advocated more enlightened methods in education, and offered models of stories and improving talks with children, which were to make them realize the value and pleasure of science and virtue. Day is of interest for his influence on Maria Edgeworth, the daughter of his intimate friend Richard Lovell Edgeworth. Her stories for children really belong to this group of didactic novels.

THOMAS HOLCROFT (1745–1809).—Holcroft was the oldest and, in his connection with actual affairs, the most intransigent of the Philosophic Radicals. His *Anna St. Ives* (1792) and *Hugh Trevor* (1794–7) are animated by the creed of Rousseauism, which had just been put to the test of history in the French Revolution. He first substantiated his anarchist gospel by painting an ecstatic picture of mankind living in utopian bliss, sans government, sans laws, and, above all, sans property. Frank Henley represents pristine virtue, like Bage's Hermsprong and other avatars of Rousseau's natural man. Holcroft's second story gives the alternative picture, and is unsparing in violent contrasts. He based his object-lessons on the doctrine of the innate perfectibility of human nature, which Godwin enunciated argumentatively in his *Political Justice* (1793).

WILLIAM GODWIN (1756–1836).—Godwin was the recognized leader of the group. His *Caleb Williams* (1794) has survived better than the rest of the revolutionary novels, not on the strength of its doctrines, but through its success in infusing that "very powerful interest" which his last preface asserted to have been his initial aim. This interest is embodied in the tragic contest between Falkland and his indefatigable pursuer, Caleb Williams—Caleb, "the very demon of curiosity personified," and the "high-minded" aristocrat whose misdeeds are the corollary of a vicious social system. In working out his scheme of a ghastly climax of oppression and fear, Godwin, the accuser of accepted laws, inevitably selected social iniquities as the evil agencies of his plot, and made his protagonists, the one a man of wealth and power, the other a scion of the weak and disinherited; which done, he could declare that his story formed "a general view of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man." His ingrained predilection for the romantic comes to the fore again in two other novels. *St. Leon* (1799) is a tale of the supernatural. A respectable gentleman, a model husband and estimable father, becomes possessed in a sufficiently commonplace manner of the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. But—here comes in the moral—immortality and inexhaustible riches fail to secure to a human creature the enjoyment of

[1] Brooke's poem *Universal Beauty* is said to have suggested *The Botanic Garden* of Erasmus Darwin.

happiness. St. Leon is dogged by misfortune, distrusted by his friends, maltreated and imprisoned by the Inquisition. The historical colour is false, and the magical business poorly contrived. But there is more experienced drawing of real life than he had previously managed in *St. Leon*, and also in *Fleetwood* (1805), in which the demands of the story again upset the calculations of the social philosopher.

MRS. INCHBALD (1753–1821).—In two novels, *A Simple Story* and *Nature and Art*, Mrs. Inchbald, actress and playwright, diverted her real powers of drawing character and telling a pathetic story to the promulgation of social and educational theories. In *A Simple Story* (1791), a perverse and wayward but captivating girl, who is always referred to with frigid etiquette as "Miss Milner," is held up as a dreadful example of the teaching carried on in old-fashioned boarding-schools. But the story is not all artificial, and the misfortunes of this unhappy woman and her daughter bring in several scenes of acute pathos, together with some sketches of people and manners not lacking in humour. *Nature and Art* (1796) is a formal exhibition of the defects of our accepted social morality, contrasting two cousins, one nurtured in a deanery and a finished product of the educational machine, the other imbibing the truths of nature on an island inhabited by savages. The only part interesting to any one but the historian of social theories is the episode in which the judge who sentences a woman to death is the man who had been her seducer.

MRS. OPIE (1769–1853).—Two cognate novels by Amelia Opie are of more than passing interest. *The Father and Daughter* (1801) is a harrowing tale of seduction and its far-reaching consequences. *Adeline Mowbray* (1804), the earliest treatment of the now hackneyed theme of the emancipated woman, embodies not only the teaching of Mary Wollstonecraft but the main incidents of her life and her connection with Godwin.

ROBERT BAGE (1728–1801).—Bage imitated Richardson in several novels, which, it has been rashly claimed, drew women more naturally than *Pamela* or *Clarissa*. He came under the influence of Holcroft and Godwin, and left a delineation of the natural man in *Hermsprong, or Man as he is Not* (1796). The deficiencies of the established order are exposed in a contrast with the beauties of a Utopian colony planted among the redskins in North American forests.

Many minor works exemplifying the appeal to pure reason in human affairs, and therewithal the failure of realism to bear the strain put upon it by argumentative novelists—if we can call such writers as Hannah More, to take a conspicuous instance, novelists at all—must go unmentioned. The problem-novel starts to life at once when realism misunderstands the proper relations of science and art.

THOMAS AMORY (?1691–1788).—Mention must be made, however, of an outlandish production of this period, one that can be termed a novel only for the reason that

a sort of story predominates over a good many other sorts of contents. This is *The Life and Opinions of John Buncle, Esq.* (1756–66), a medley of oblique autobiography and disquisitions on religious questions, medicine, metaphysics, mathematics, logic, and endless other matters, by a bigoted Unitarian. Amory and Buncle are obviously the same person. Buncle is probably not more eccentric in character and opinions than his author, who gave a rein to his admiration of the sex in his *Memoirs of Several Ladies*. Buncle is a good liver who journeys about England, giving fanciful descriptions of the northern parts, marries and buries seven wives, and then settles down to a meditative old age. Eating and drinking, the charms of his successive brides, the comfortable side of nature, and the other topics alluded to above, are dilated on with untiring gusto—and a humour which is absolutely unconscious and unintentional.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—GOLDSMITH, O.: *Works* (5 vols., Bell, 1885–6); *Vicar of Wakefield* (numerous editions).—BURNEY, FRANCES: *Evelina* (2 vols., Bell, 1904; Temple Classics, Dent, 1903); *Cecilia* (3 vols., Dent); *Diary and Letters*, ed. A. Dobson (6 vols., Macmillan, 1904–5).—RADCLIFFE, Mrs.: *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Romance of the Forest* (Routledge, 1903).—WALPOLE, H.: *The Castle of Otranto* (Chatto, 1907).—LEWIS, M. G.: *The Monk*, ed. E. A. Baker (Routledge, 1907).—JOHNSTONE, C.: *Chrysal*, ed. E. A. Baker (Routledge, 1904).—JOHNSON, Dr. S.: *Rasselas*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Clarendon Press, 1887).—BROOKE, H.: *The Fool of Quality*, ed. E. A. Baker (Routledge, 1906).—GODWIN, W.: *Caleb Williams*, (Routledge, 1903).—INCHBALD, Mrs.: *A Simple Story*, with introduction by G. L. Strachey (Oxford University Press, 1908).—AMORY, T.: *John Buncle*, ed. E. A. Baker (Routledge, 1904).

Critical Studies.—SAINTSBURY, G.: *The English Novel* (Dent, 1913).—WILLIAMS, H.: *Two Centuries of the English Novel* (Smith, Elder, 1911).—English Men of Letters: *Goldsmith, Fanny Burney, Dr. Johnson* (Macmillan, v.y.).

Chapter II. THE NEW POETRY

Dyer—Shenstone—Young's *Night Thoughts*—James Thomson: *The Seasons*, *The Castle of Indolence*—Gray and Collins—Macpherson's *Ossian*—Chatterton—William Blake—Robert Burns—George Crabbe—William Cowper

THE BEGINNINGS OF REVOLT

Reaction against the dominant ideals of the Augustan school is a salient fact in the history of English poetry during the later 18th century. This reaction began, indeed, while Pope himself was at the summit of his fame, but it gained greatly in volume and influence in the decades immediately preceding the rise of Wordsworth. As it had no programme, no central movement, and no leader, it was for the most part tentative in character, and it sought many avenues of escape from conventions which by little and little were coming to be recognized as deadening and oppressive. Through the resulting confusion it is none the less possible to follow certain well-marked lines of change. Augustan poetry had been in the main a poetry of the intellect; with what has been called "the renaissance of the feelings" (a cardinal fact in the Age of Johnson) came a deepening sense of the wonder and mystery of life, and passion and imagination once more asserted their power.[1] Augustan poetry, again, confined itself almost entirely to "the Town," and was thus narrowly metropolitan in theme, outlook, and spirit; the new generation of poets began to turn more and more from "the Town" to nature and rural life. This change was accompanied by an ever-increasing interest in man as man, by the emergence of vague ideas (presently reinforced by the teachings of Rousseau) about the need of a "return to nature," and in general by the spread of theories regarding the essential superiority of "nature" to "art." The whole conception of poetry underwent in consequence a profound modification; the emphasis was thrown upon originality and inspiration as contrasted with mere craftsmanship; the poet figured, in the phraseology of the time, as an "enthusiast" rather than as a "wit."[2] Interest in other ages meanwhile helped to restore romance to poetry, and this romantic movement is specifically associated with the imitation of Spenser and the old ballads and (in part inspired by this) with a far-reaching "Gothic" or mediæval revival.[3] At the same time, efforts were made to break away from the conventional

[1] As early as 1746 we find Joseph Warton recording his conviction that "the fashion of moralizing in verse has been carried too far," and that "invention and imagination" are "the chief faculties of a poet" (Preface to *Odes*).

[2] This new conception finds expression, for example, in Beattie's *Minstrel*, and was stimulated by Warton's *History of English Poetry*, and by the legends and literature of the Middle Ages.

[3] *Cf.* Hurd's contention that "Gothic" manners provide better material for poetry than those of "heroic" times (*Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, 1762).

diction of Pope and his disciples, and to make poetry speak once more in a simpler and more natural tongue. Finally, the supremacy of the classic couplet was attacked, and experiments made in other media—in the Spenserian stanza, the ode, blank verse, and various other forms.

In this chapter we are to deal briefly with a number of men between Pope's early days and the time of Wordsworth, in whose writings, in one or another way, the influences at work in this great transition are apparent. Poets who in this era of change stood broadly for the continuance of the Augustan tradition do not fall within our present scope, and are considered elsewhere (see p. 299).

JOHN DYER (? 1699–1758)

Life.—Born at Aberglasney, in Carmarthenshire, the son of a solicitor, and educated at Westminster, Dyer gave up the law to study art under Jonathan Richardson, a painter and author. He also visited Italy, and on his return took holy orders, and held several small livings in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. He married on his first preferment, and died rector of Belchford, near Horncastle. Dyer was a man of reputable life and scanty ambition. He belonged to no literary circle, and spent his later days in a country where his delight in natural scenery can hardly have been satisfied.

Works.—*Grongar Hill* and *The Country Walk* (in Lewis's *Miscellany*, 1726); *Grongar Hill* (second version, 1727); *The Ruins of Rome* (1740); *The Fleece* (1757).

Nature.—Dyer must have carried to Westminster a boyish love for the scenery of his Welsh hills, and renewed this love during his brief sojourn in his father's office. Wordsworth's sonnet to him speaks of his hallowing with musical delight the soft scenes through which his childhood strayed. Metrically *Grongar Hill* is a close imitation of Milton's *L'Allegro*:

Yet Time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile complete,
Big with the vanity of state;
But transient is the smile of Fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sun-beam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.
And see the rivers how they run,
Through woods and meads, in shade and sun,
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life to endless sleep!
Thus is Nature's vesture wrought,
To instruct our wandering thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.

Gilbert White recognized in all Dyer's work an exact observation of nature, and in this respect set him above Milton, whose eyesight was never strong enough to be exact. *The Ruins of Rome* shows that Dyer regarded objects rather with a poet's than with a painter's eye. On reading this work Gray risked the ridicule of Horace Walpole by asserting that Dyer " has more of poetry in his imagination than any of our number." Gray adds that Dyer was " rough and injudicious." *The Fleece* is a more ambitious work, and at times labours under the pomposities of contemporary poetic diction. On the other hand, there is in it no false attempt to oppose the simplicity of a country life to the activities of a manufacturing town. Dyer has no more interest in the shearing of a Lincolnshire sheep than in the Birmingham factory where the shears are forged. He is aware that either scene has a beauty of its own, and his poem becomes, as Wordsworth says,

a living landscape, fair and bright.

Such appreciation was not universal among Dyer's contemporaries. Fleet Street criticism, as represented by Johnson, declared it impossible to " write poetically of serges and druggets." It annoyed the dictator that many people talked " gravely of that *excellent* poem *The Fleece.*" The literary rebellion was as yet in its infancy, and Horace Walpole, who had started the rebellion in architecture and in fiction, failed to see that he had an ally in Dyer.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE (1714–63)

Life.—Born at Halesowen, near Dudley, Shenstone was educated at the local grammar school and at Oxford. In 1745 he went to live at the Leasowes, a house at Halesowen inherited from his grandfather. Here his time and money were given to landscape gardening in the style which was imitated from him on a much larger scale by Lord Temple at Stowe. He died a bachelor.

Works.—*Poems* (1737); *The Judgment of Hercules* (1741); *The Schoolmistress* (second version, 1742); *The Pastoral Ballad* and other poems in *Dodsley's Collection* (1748–58).

Character.—Heavy and shy, Shenstone's ambition was to be known as the creator of the most beautiful garden in England; but he did not enjoy it. He hankered for town, but could have made no figure in literary society. " Poor man ! " wrote Gray, " he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned, but which he enjoyed only when people of note came to see and commend it."

Style.—Shenstone lives by the lilt in his lyrics which fixes them on the memory of childhood. There is no other poetic quality in such a line as " My banks they

are furnish'd with bees," but no effort can make us forget it. Cowper's use of the trisyllabic metres was probably suggested by Shenstone's, and Byron, Moore, and others gave them vogue. There is some feeling in *The Schoolmistress*, where the Spenserian stanza is used for a humble theme, and in *The Pastoral Ballad*.

The *Elegies*, perhaps in part autobiographical, had enough pathos to win the admiration of Burns. His fancy brings us at times a reminiscence of Milton's youth.

> Here, in cool grot and mossy cell,
> We rural fays and faeries dwell;
> Though rarely seen by mortal eye,
> When the pale Moon, ascending high,
> Darts through yon lines her quivering beams,
> We frisk it near these crystal streams.
>
> *On a Tablet against a Root-House.*

EDWARD YOUNG (1681–1765)

Life and Character.—Edward Young was born in 1681 at Upham Rectory, near Winchester. In 1708 he became a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and when nearly fifty, after many attempts to find a channel for his ambitions in secular life, he entered the Church, and was appointed one of the royal chaplains and rector of Welwyn, Herts. But he did not receive the preferment he had expected, and though his marriage with Lady Elizabeth Lee in 1731 made him rich, he closed his long life (1765) a disappointed man. Young was a toady and place-hunter of the most shameless kind, and his relations with the Duke of Wharton show his utter indifference to the moral character of his patrons.

Works.—His principal works are: *The Last Day* (1713), in classic couplets, and full of the fustian which with Young too often did duty for the sublime. *The Force of Religion, or Vanquished Love* (1713), a vapid poem, also in classic couplets, on Lady Jane Grey and Lord Guildford. Three tragedies—*Busiris* (1719), *The Revenge* (1721), and *The Brothers* (1728; performed 1753)—things of sound and fury with no real dramatic power. *Love of Fame, or the Universal Passion* (1725–8), seven satires which, though careless in style, have much vigour and wit. It is important to note that they preceded Pope's work in the same field. *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* (1742–4), a pretentious and bombastic poem in nine books, on life, death, and immortality, has many quotable lines and occasional passages of genuine sublimity. Its atmosphere is, however, oppressive, its sentiment hollow, its philosophy thoroughly unwholesome.

Characteristics.—Young's radical insincerity ruined his work when he attempted the higher ranges of thought and passion. As a poet of the transition he is important on the side of form, because in *Night Thoughts* he abandoned the classic couplet and took to blank verse. In his remarkable *Conjectures on Original Composition*, written

when he was seventy-seven (1759) in the form of a letter to Richardson, he not only defended blank verse, but argued that the time had come for the poet to reject models and rely upon his own inspiration, and that genius was greater than rules. The prevailing gloom of his principal poem must also be recognized as an interesting historical feature; *Night Thoughts* did much to spread the spirit of romantic melancholy both in English and in Continental literatures.[1]

JAMES THOMSON (1700–48)

Life and Character.—James Thomson was born at Ednam, Roxburghshire (1700), bred at Jedburgh and at Edinburgh University, and was destined by his father to follow his own calling in the Presbyterian ministry. But the pulpit not being to his taste, he resolved to try his fortunes in London. The publication of *Winter* (1726) gave him reputation, and the generosity of patrons and, later, various sinecures and a pension, provided him with the means of living at his ease. He died a bachelor in 1748. Thomson was an amiable man, who had many friends and not a single enemy. Though he died in middle life, his lazy habits had already made him "more fat than bard beseems" (*The Castle of Indolence*, i. 68).

Works.—*The Seasons* (1726–30), a descriptive poem in four books; *Britannia* (1729) and *Liberty* (1735–7), political poems, the only interest of which for us lies in the fact that, like *The Seasons*, they are in blank verse. Plays: *Sophonisba* (1729); *Agamemnon* (1738); *Edward and Eleanora* (1739); *The Masque of Alfred* (1740), in collaboration with David Mallet (the famous "Rule, Britannia," in Act II. is probably from Thomson's pen); *Tancred and Sigismunda* (1745); *Coriolanus* (performed 1749). There is nothing noteworthy about any of these plays. *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), a poem in the Spenserian stanza, describes in Canto i. the enchanted castle of the wizard Indolence and his victims, and in Canto ii. the conquest of Indolence by the Knight of Arts and Industry.

Characteristics.—Thomson's fame rests entirely upon *The Seasons* and *The Castle of Indolence*, and these suffice to give him a high place among our poets of the second order. They are also among the most notable poems of the transition. *The Seasons*, the first important piece of 18th-century blank verse, is also the first long poem the interest of which is centred in nature instead of man. In many ways it belongs to its age. Its vocabulary is highly Latinized; its style in general is ornate and rhetorical; examples of the conventional poetic diction abound; the movement of the blank verse often suggests the couplet. But Thomson none the less writes as a genuine lover of nature, who has seen and studied nature at first hand and for him-

[1] Mention may be made of a short poem, *The Grave* (published 1743, though written many years earlier), by a Scottish minister, Robert Blair (1699–1746), as another noteworthy production of the same school.

self; his landscape is real landscape; his incidental touches often delight by their truth and felicity.

Thro' the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man.

His philosophical digressions and narrative episodes are also interesting. Many of these are merely padding; many represent the poet's concession to the didactic taste of his time. But others treat of rustic people and manners, and with aspects of life deemed vulgar in the London drawing-room, and in the sympathy which they show for the humble and obscure they anticipate the humanitarianism of the next generation. *The Castle of Indolence* is by far the best of the innumerable Spenserian poems of the century. Thomson had not indeed altogether outgrown the half-contemptuous attitude of his age towards the author of *The Faerie Queene*: "This poem being writ in the manner of Spenser, the obsolete words, and a simplicity of diction in some of the lines, which borders on the ludicrous, were necessary to make the imitation more perfect" (*Advertisement*).

Another guest there was, of sense refined,
Who felt each worth, for every worth he had;
Serene yet warm, humane yet firm his mind,
As little touch'd as any man's with bad;
Him through their inmost walks the Muses lad,
To him the sacred love of nature lent,
And sometimes would he make our valley glad;
Whenas we found he would not here be pent,
To him the better sort this friendly message sent.

Castle of Indolence, Canto I.

But his love of Spenser was none the less deep and sincere; he calls him his "master"; the devotion with which he has studied him is everywhere apparent in his poem, and to him he is, of course, indebted for his "Gothic" machinery. The poem has a definite plan, and restored to English verse not only the metrical charm of the Elizabethans, but also that element of mystical suggestiveness which is essential to the highest poetry.

Minor Works.—When, as in *Liberty*, Thomson chose a subject not suited to him, his failure was complete. Thomson's tragedies owe their origin not to inspiration, but to fashion and the hope of profit. *Sophonisba* is an attempt to follow Otway.

None held the stage except *Tancred and Sigismunda* with a plot from *Gil Blas*. This was last acted in 1819.

Conclusion.—The immediate and great vogue of *The Seasons* shows that there must have been some latent and hardly conscious dissatisfaction with the school of Dryden and Pope, even though the most popular parts of the work may have been the stories and rhapsodies. Warton, some half-century later, was the first to state clearly the difference between the poetical spirit of Thomson and the ornate diction of Pope. With all his freshness, Thomson could not quite free himself from the influence of his age, and the false ornaments in his work explain, if they fail to justify, Wordsworth's description of his style as vicious. Wordsworth none the less admitted his inspiration, and realized how much influence *The Seasons* had upon Cowper.

GRAY AND COLLINS

THOMAS GRAY (1716–71).—Born in London, the son of a scrivener, he went through Eton (where he made friends with Horace Walpole and Richard West) to Cambridge, where, first at Peterhouse and afterwards at Pembroke College, he made his home from his twenty-fifth year. Meantime he had travelled in France and Italy with Horace Walpole—with whom he quarrelled on the way—and a further six months alone. His father, from whom he had scanty help or sympathy, died in 1741, his friend West in 1742, and his mother, to whom he was devoted, in 1753. A scholar, an historian, and a naturalist, he became the most learned Englishman of his time; but his very scholarship made him less inclined to write than to read. He found amusement in travelling through the Lakes, Wales, and Scotland, and he set the taste for picturesque scenery. In 1757 he refused to be poet laureate, but in 1768 he was appointed to the sinecure professorship of history and modern languages. He maintained a constant correspondence with several friends, and his letters rank with those of Byron and of Cowper. He died a bachelor at Cambridge.

Works and Characteristics.—Small in quantity, Gray's verse is so exquisite in quality that he has a secure place among the finest poetic artists in our literature. Historically his work is also interesting, as being within its narrow limits an epitome of many of the changes which were coming over English poetry during his lifetime. He began to write as a close follower of Dryden and Pope. His first important effort was the fragmentary *De Principiis Cogitandi* (1740–2), an attempt to put Locke's philosophy into Latin hexameters. To Gray's Augustan period also belong two scenes of a "classical" tragedy, *Agrippina* (1741–2); a *Hymn to Ignorance* (1742), and an *Essay on the Alliance of Education and Government* (1748), both didactic, both in classic couplets, and both unfinished; and several lyric poems—*Ode on the Spring* (1742), *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1742), and *To Adversity* (1742)—in which the influence of Dryden's lyrics is strongly marked, and which

are thoroughly Augustan in their conventional imagery and diction. Then came the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (published 1750), in which, as signs of the new spirit, we note the faithful rendering of a bit of real English landscape (the " Venus' train " and " Attic warbler " of the early odes are now gone) ; the churchyard setting ; the sympathetic touch upon " the short and simple annals of the poor " ; the twilight atmosphere ; and the mood of tender and pensive melancholy. But the *Elegy* was only a stage in Gray's poetic evolution. His third period was marked by an immense growth of romanticism in *The Progress of Poesy* (1754) and *The Bard* (1755), and even more in the poems on northern and Celtic themes—*The Fatal Sisters* (1761), *The Descent of Odin* (1761), *The Triumphs of Owen* and *The Death of Hoel* (both published 1768)—which, written under the influence of Ossian, Evans's *Poetry of the Ancient Welsh Bards*, and Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, exhibit him as a leader in the movement for the opening up of the world of the romantic past. Gray's letters furnish a valuable commentary upon his poetic development. They show how keenly he followed every manifestation of the new spirit in literature, and how quickly responsive he was to every fresh impression. They reveal, too, his love of nature. In the journal which he kept of his visit to the English Lake country, at the very end of his life, there are passages of description in reading which we find it difficult to believe that we are still in the 18th century.

Character.—Gray was a man of delicate judgment, humour, and sentiment, with a strong feeling for beauty and a warm heart for his friends. Lack of health and of spirits made him shy and retiring, gave him a touch of pessimism, and combined with his fastidious taste to limit his poetical output. With a frame like Virgil's he had not Virgil's external incentive to attempt a great work, and, had he attempted it, he would have desired, like Virgil on his deathbed, to see the manuscript destroyed.

Views.—Gray held strongly that, except among the French, " the language of the age is never the language of poetry " (to West, 1742) ; and that the poetic diction was as manifest in Dryden and Pope as in the Elizabethans. He accounted himself of the school of Dryden, and told Beattie that any excellence in his own numbers had been learned from " that great poet." Indeed, he occasionally borrowed a phrase from Dryden, and once at least, in *The Bard*, made an unhappy use of it, since in

Leave ample room and verge enough

the two last words are a reminiscence. Then Gray did not acknowledge any difference of kind between the poetry of Shakespeare or Milton and the verse of what he called the French school. Though well read in Plato and Aristotle, he had small regard for the philosophers of his own age. In theology he had little interest, but his hearty dislike of infidelity made him seriously unjust to Voltaire and Hume. Occasionally he seems to show some dim fear of coming revolution.

Characteristics.—Gray's best poems fall into three classes. The *Ode on the Drowning of Horace Walpole's Cat* and *The Long Story* are essentially playful. Their charm is but little impaired by a few flaws in the workmanship, by such a phrase as "the azure flowers that blow," or the suggestion that what the cat desired was not fish but gold. The poems on *Spring*, on *Eton*, and on *Adversity*, and the *Elegy* have human life for their theme and are steeped in the pensive melancholy characteristic of their author:

> The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
> The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
> The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
> No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.
> . . . . . .
> Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
> Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
> Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
> The short and simple annals of the poor.

The Pindaric odes, whose subjects are the history of England and of poetry, though not the most popular, are perhaps the most perfect of Gray's poems. Set in a frame of metre which follows the strophe and antistrophe of Pindar, the form of their movement and evolution leaves nothing to be desired. That they were not meant to be popular is shown by the motto in which the poet describes himself as φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι, "speaking to them that understand."

Summary.—On no poet have critics and poets differed more than on Gray. To Swinburne he was supreme in elegy and songless in song; while Arnold set the poetic qualities of the *Odes* above those of the *Elegy*. To Wordsworth the language of the *Elegy* was unintelligible; to Johnson some of its stanzas were so good that, had all his works reached that standard, it would have been "vain to blame and useless to praise him"; and Palgrave called the same stanzas "perhaps the noblest in our language." One critic calls the *Ode on Poesy* "the harbinger of the romantic movement"; to another it is "the last splendid utterance of a dying classicism." In fact, Gray belongs to a transitional school, and critics are apt to accentuate one side of him. In his language and his ornaments, his inversions and personifications, he is of the classical school, while his sense of grandeur and sublimity, his love of nature and his naturalist's eye, mark him the herald of the coming age. He made complaint that his *Elegy* pleased by its subject and would have been as well liked in prose; and his complaint is so far true that those who admired did not always understand. Thus he wrote with a characteristic inversion

> . . . all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Awaits alike the inevitable hour,

his point being that death sits waiting for the great though they do not heed it. Yet for a century readers were content with the corrupt reading of "await" for

" awaits," which belies the whole sense of the passage. In the *Elegy* there is some vagueness of phrase—for instance, " ply her evening care,"—but no real obscurity.

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721–59).—Born at Chichester, the son of a prosperous hatter, Collins became a scholar of Winchester, and formed a close friendship with Joseph Warton, his junior by three months. In 1740 he went to Oxford, matriculating from Queen's College shortly before Warton went into residence at Oriel. In 1741 he obtained a demyship at Magdalen. He graduated in 1743 and went to London in quest of a literary career. There he bore much privation and some imprisonment for debt. Johnson befriended him, and he was intimate with Thomson. From those troubles he was relieved in 1749 by an uncle's legacy, but he was broken in health and spirits. From despondency he fell into madness. His sister gave him shelter at Chichester, where he died.

Works.—*Persian Eclogues* (1742; renamed *Oriental Eclogues*, 1757); *Verses address'd to Sir Thomas Hanmer* (1743); *Odes* (1746; dated 1747); *Ode on the Death of Thomson* (1749); *Dirge* in *Cymbeline* (1749); *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* (written 1749; printed 1788).

Character.—In Collins a warm heart and a keen and pure sense of beauty were ill lodged in a weak frame. He planned considerable works, such as tragedies and a history of the revival of learning, but was never in health to carry out his plans. He was well-read in ancient and in foreign literature, and his friends delighted in his conversation. Had he been capable of sustained effort, he would have had few rivals among his contemporaries.

Views.—Though a friend of Johnson, Collins was politically a disciple of Milton. He was not afraid to sing the virtues of republicanism or to maintain that Liberty had made the vales of England her last abode.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall a while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

In poetical taste he was in full sympathy with Warton, and his genius so far excelled his friend's that we may take it that Warton's critical work owed its

substance to Collins. If that be so, Collins was the real leader of the revolution in literary criticism and the chief forerunner of the Romantic school.

Lyrical Nature of his Work.—The works of Collins are wholly lyric or elegiac, except the *Verses to Sir Thomas Hanmer*, an unfortunate excursus into the field of criticism. In the *Odes* there is a taste not less exquisite than Gray's, and a more inborn sense of song. They deserve the three epithets bestowed upon them by Wordsworth—bright, solemn, and serene.

> For when thy folding-star arising shows
> His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
> The fragrant Hours, and Elves
> Who slept in buds the day,
>
> And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
> And sheds the freshening dew, and lovelier still,
> The pensive Pleasures sweet
> Prepare thy shadowy car.—*Ode to Evening*.

What Collins called the "Ode," but might more justly have called the "Elegy," on the death of Thomson stands alone for purity and sincerity among the numerous commemorative elegies of the century.

Characteristics.—It was the misfortune of Collins to be born before his time and to die so young that he did not live into it. The contemporary view of his work is expressed by Johnson, whose love for the man did not alter his judgment:

> His diction was often harsh, unskilfully laboured, and injudiciously selected. He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival; and he put words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants.

Johnson saw a clogging of the movement in such lines as

> The oak-crown'd sisters and their chaste-ey'd queen,

a needless inversion in

> Beyond the measure vast of thought
> The works the wizard Time has wrought,

and a needless revival of the obsolete in such words as "lorn," "westering," "runnel," and others for which his own dictionary quotes no later authority than the Elizabethans. Indeed some of them, of which "lorn" is one, seem to have died out with Spenser. What Johnson failed to see was that such words came naturally to Collins, as perhaps they did not come naturally to Warton, who at any rate is less judicious in his choice. They are a genuine part of the dialect in which Collins thought, and they were a necessary revival if English was to recover its power of poetical expres-

sion. On the necessity of such a revival Gray wrote to West some three months after the publication of the *Persian Eclogues:*

> Shakespeare's language is one of his principal beauties; and he has no less advantage over your Addisons and Rowes in this, than in those other great excellences you mention. Every word in him is a picture. Pray put me the following lines into the tongue of our modern dramatists:
>
> But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
> Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass:
> I, that am rudely stampt, and want love's majesty
> To strut before a wanton ambling nymph:
> I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up——
>
> And what follows. To me they appear untranslatable; and if this be the case, our language is greatly degenerated.

Not in the dialect of your Addisons and Rowes did Collins write:

> Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
> The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
> And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power,
> In pageant robes and wreathed with sheeny gold,
> And on their twilight tombs aerial councils hold.

Johnson in his dictionary observes that the word "sheeny" is "not in use." It must be noted that the use of such words is not a cause but a result of the change in poetic feelings. With the new speech there disappears the eloquence no less than the wit which for nearly a century had been cultivated by our makers of verse. It may be that Collins had little eye for the smaller objects of nature, but his sense of landscape was sure and he doubtless enjoyed

> the hut
> That from the mountain's side
> Views wilds, and swelling floods,
> And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires;
> And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
> Thy dewy fingers draw
> The gradual dusky veil.—*Eve.*

The characteristic music of such lines is not heard again until it reappears in *The Scholar-Gipsy* and the *Thyrsis* of Matthew Arnold.

Historical Position. — Historically, the most remarkable of all Collins's poems is the *Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, considered as the Subject of Poetry.* This was written as early as 1749, and was sent in manuscript to "Douglas" Home, but it was not published till 1788, when it appeared in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.* Its very title suffices to indicate its importance in the early Romantic movement. Completely emancipated from the Augustan tradition, Collins appears in it as a pioneer in the revival of the romantic past and the return of imagination to English poetry.

JAMES MACPHERSON (1736–96)

Life and Character.—James Macpherson was born at Ruthven, Inverness-shire, in 1736, studied for a time at King's College, Aberdeen, and became a schoolmaster in his native village. He occupied his leisure in the writing of miscellaneous poetry, including a blank-verse imitation of Blair's *Grave*, entitled *Death*, and in 1758 published *The Highlander*, a poem in six cantos and in classic couplets on the invasion of Scotland by the Danes in the 11th century. In 1760 appeared his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Galic* [*sic*] *or Erse Language*. This tiny volume (the "fragments" numbered only sixteen) excited great interest; a fund was raised in Edinburgh, and Macpherson was sent out on an exploring tour through the Highlands in search of further material of the same character. The result was the publication of two epic poems ascribed to Ossian, a Gaelic bard of the 3rd century—*Fingal*, in six books (1762) and *Temora* in eight (1763). But meanwhile suspicions concerning the authenticity even of the *Fragments* had been growing rapidly, and the epics precipitated a storm of controversy which for some years shook the whole literary world. But however vigorously Macpherson might be denounced by Johnson and others as an impudent forger, the Ossianic poems brought him fame and fortune. In 1764 he was appointed surveyor-general of the Floridas, and though he returned to Scotland in 1766 he was allowed to retain his salary as a pension for life. He then devoted himself to political journalism and literature, producing among other things a translation of the *Iliad* in Ossianic prose (1773). In 1779 he received the very lucrative post of agent to the Nabob of Arcot, and entered Parliament the following year. He died at Belleville, an estate which he had purchased in Inverness-shire, in 1796.

The Ossianic Poems.—It is neither necessary nor possible to enter here into the details of the Ossianic problem, or to determine how much or how little of the poems in question is to be referred to faithful translation, free adaptation, or downright manufacture. Taking them as they stand, we are concerned at the moment only with their characteristics and influence. From this point of view emphasis must first be laid on their form. Though Macpherson had at the outset intended to put his specimens into classic couplets, he relinquished this design on the advice of friends, and adopted instead a loosely rhythmical prose medium which certainly owes something to the poetical books of the Old Testament.[1] *Ossian* thus represents the extreme reaction against the regularity of Augustan versification. But while this freedom of movement and the rhapsodical style which accompanied it had not a little to do with its success, the ultimate explanation of its popularity is to be sought in its matter and spirit. The poems, as Blair pointed out in his famous *Dissertation*, are "wild and romantic." They are filled with supernaturalism: as

[1] Attention had then recently been directed to the formal characteristics of Hebrew verse by Bishop Lowth's epoch-making *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum* (1753).

Gray noted in regard to *The Song of the Six Bards*, almost every one in them "sees ghosts, more or less." They are steeped in romantic melancholy, and for this reason again, "poor, moaning, melancholy Macpherson" caught the taste of the time.

> *Connal.*—Fall I may! But raise my tomb, Crimora!
> Grey stones, a mound of earth, shall send my name to other times.
> Bend thy red eye over my grave, beat thy mournful heaving breast.
> Though fair thou art, my love, as the light; more pleasant than the gale of
> The hill; yet I will not here remain. Raise my tomb, Crimora!
>
> *Carrie-Thura, a poem.*

Nor must the social aspect of the poems be overlooked. They presented to their readers a world of heroic simplicity set in a landscape of mountains and mists, and this appealed forcibly to the imaginations of men who were beginning to feel cramped by the conventions of social life, and were growing weary of the drawing-room tone of fashionable literature. To us they have an unmistakable falsetto quality; to their first public they came like a strong voice out of the natural, primitive world. Thus a wave of Ossianic enthusiasm swept over Europe In England there was scarcely a poet of the next generation, Wordsworth excepted, who did not pass through a period of Ossianism. In France and Germany their influence was even more profound and far-reaching.

THOMAS CHATTERTON (1752–70)

Life and Character.—Thomas Chatterton was born in 1752 in Bristol. His forefathers had been sextons of St. Mary Redcliffe for many generations, and it was among the parchments in the muniment room of that wonderful church, beneath the shadow of which his childhood was passed, that the dreamy boy seems first to have conceived the Rowley myth. Apprenticed to John Lambert, an attorney, he spent his scanty leisure in the study of poetry, history, heraldry, and mediæval antiquities. In 1769 he sent a batch of Rowley poems to Walpole, who was at first deceived by them, but was afterwards advised by Gray and Mason, to whom in turn he submitted them, that they were forgeries. After several vain applications from Chatterton, who stoutly maintained their genuineness, Walpole at length returned both manuscripts and the lad's letter. In April 1770 Chatterton left Bristol for London, where for a time he worked with feverish haste and unremitting industry in the hopeless attempt to support himself by his pen. Penniless and starving, he at length gave up the struggle, and in a fit of despair poisoned himself in his attic in Brooke Street, Holborn, August 24, 1770. Precocious in genius, Chatterton was scarcely less precocious in character. Proud, aggressive, cynical, he showed even as a child an extraordinary faculty for exploiting the weaknesses of human nature, and although he died a mere youth, he already had a man's familiarity with the evil of the world. Yet any adverse judgment we may pass upon him must be tempered by recollection of the crushing weight of his circumstances, of the tragedy of his brief life.

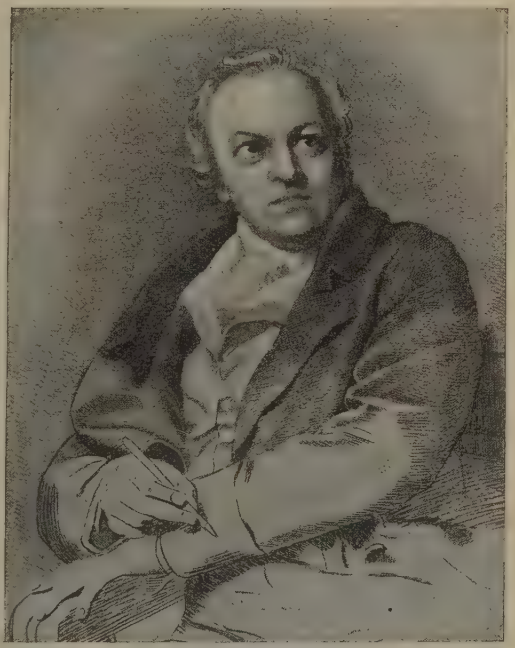
Works and Characteristics.—Chatterton's poems fall into two classes: those which he acknowledged, and those which he ascribed to Thomas Rowley, a mythical Bristol priest of the 15th century (or, in a few unimportant cases, to Rowley's supposed friends). The acknowledged poems are very miscellaneous in character, and prove the young writer's versatility. But they are for the most part in the style of the time, and while often clever in an imitative way—*e.g.* the satire *Kew Gardens*—have little independent value. The best are to be found in the *African Eclogues*, in which the classic couplet is employed with great vigour and skill. The pseudo-antique poems, which are far more interesting, include dramas and interludes (*Ælla*, *Goddwyn*), dramatic lyrics, eclogues, epic poems (*Battle of Hastings*, etc.), and shorter narratives (e.g., *Bristowe Tragedie* and the noble *Balade of Charitie*). To-day it seems amazing that these fabrications should ever have deceived critical readers. We now know exactly how Chatterton concocted his impossible Rowleian dialect, and recognize his borrowings from 18th-century poets and his innumerable anachronisms in thought, phrase, and form (as, *e.g.*, his frequent use of Prior's ten-line stanza and the introduction of blank verse in *Ælla*). It is probable that the factitious interest of the long dead "Rowley controversy," and even more the tragedy of the young author's life, have been largely responsible for an exaggerated estimate of the actual value of the poems in question. But it may be conceded that, together with much that is crude and immature, they contain the most remarkable work ever done in English poetry by a youth of Chatterton's age. So again with their historical significance. To regard Chatterton, with Watts-Dunton, as "the father of the New Romantic school," is to take him altogether out of his proper perspective, and seriously to overstate both his originality and his influence. But the Rowley poems are still of importance, along with Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry*, Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, and Percy's *Reliques*, as showing the growing strength of the Gothic revival in the decade between 1760 and 1770.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827)

Life and Character.—William Blake was born in London in 1757, became an engraver by profession, though he gave much of his time to poetry and painting, and closed a long life of struggle, poverty, and neglect in 1827. Essentially a mystic and a visionary, Blake appeared as "a new kind of man" in the rationalistic 18th century. Even as a child he had in his lonely rambles seen angels among the trees and in the sky; he always believed himself in intimate intercourse with the spiritual world; and he died "singing of the things he saw in heaven." This mystical quality pervades all his work, whether with graver, brush, or pen. The bias of his mind and his literary taste are clearly shown in his imaginative illustrations to such works as the *Book of Job*, *Night Thoughts*, and *The Grave*.

Works and Characteristics.—Blake's principal writings are: *Poetical Sketches*

(1783); *Songs of Innocence* (1787); *The Book of Thel* (1787); *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790); *The Gates of Paradise* (1793); *The Vision of the Daughters of Albion* (1793); *America* (1793); *Europe* (1794); *The Book of Urizen* (1794); *Songs of Experience* (1794); *The Song of Los* (1795); *The Book of Ahaniah* (1795); *Jerusalem* (1804). Most of these belong to the class of "apocalyptic" literature; to the casual reader they appear chaotic and obscure, and often quite unintelligible. Despite the daring originality and pregnancy of their thought (as in the remarkable *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), they will therefore appeal only to a few chosen disciples here and there. Such part of Blake's poetry as, on the other hand, concerns every lover of literature is to be found in the *Sketches* and in the *Songs of Innocence* and *Experience*. These have a spontaneity and a charm which make us forget their not infrequent technical imperfections. In the purity of their lyric note they are all but unique in the English literature of the time. Their democratic sentiment is also important. But most significant of all is their love of nature, of simple life, of childhood and home, in which they point directly forward to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Blake stood apart from the general literary movements of his age. But he reveals the influence of the Elizabethan revival, of the growing love of Spenser, of Percy's *Reliques*, of Chatterton, and, in the formlessness of his "apocalyptic" writings, of *Ossian*. Though his work is in many ways prophetic, it was little known, and therefore exercised a very slight influence only on his contemporaries and immediate successors.



William Blake.
(*British Museum.*)

ROBERT BURNS (1759–96)

Life and Character.—Robert Burns came of a Kincardineshire family of small farmers, and was born in his father's "auld clay bigging" at Alloway, two miles from Ayr, in 1759. His education included an excellent grounding in English, and subsequently French and the rudiments of Latin. This he supplemented by wide reading in standard literature. He worked on his father's farm from childhood

till he was twenty-three, by which time he had gained a local reputation as a poet and a philanderer. Having failed in farming on his own account, he was on the point of emigrating to Jamaica when his plans were changed by the success of his volume of poems (1786), which brought him some money and introduced him to the literary and fashionable society of Edinburgh. With the proceeds of a second edition (1787) he took the farm of Ellisland, near Dumfries. His union with Jean Armour was regularized by marriage in 1788. But ill-fortune still pursued him, and to eke out a livelihood he became an exciseman. Then, his farm going from bad to worse, he gave it up altogether (1791) and removed to Dumfries, with his government position as his only means of support. In the autumn of 1795 his health, never very robust, broke down completely, and he died in July of the following year. He wrote great songs to the last — for example, *Duncan Gray* and *O wert thou in the Cauld Blast.* Of Burns's moral failings, and especially of his dissipation and profligacy, enough has always been made; such "thoughtless follies," in his own words, "laid him low" and have "stained his name." Sufficient stress, on the other hand, has not always been thrown upon his generosity, his wide sympathies, and his manly independence, as shown, for example, in his relations with his aristocratic patrons in the capital.

Robert Burns.
(From the painting by Nasmyth.)

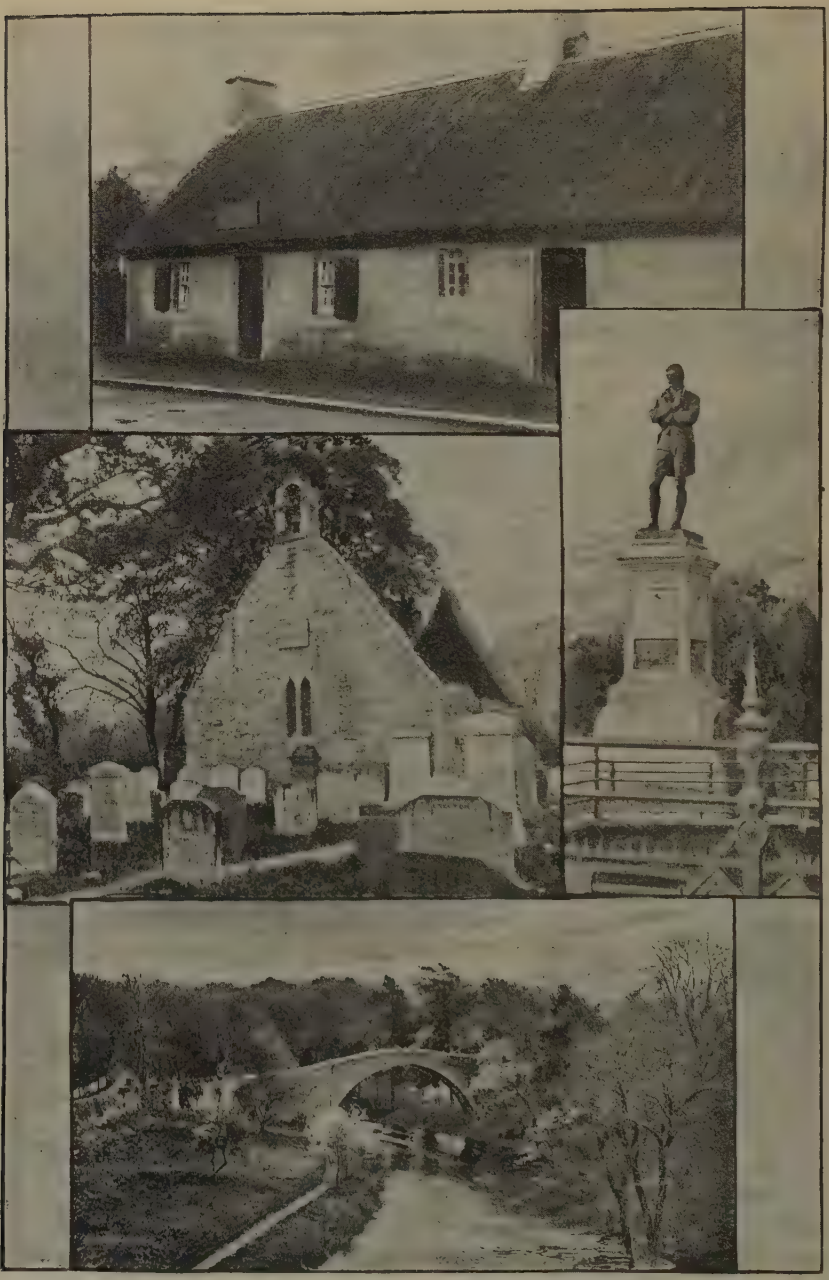
Works and Characteristics.—Endowed with a marvellous gift of song, Burns is supreme in his lyrics; but he is also great as a descriptive poet and as a satirist; and in all these capacities his absolute sincerity lies at the root of his power. True to himself and to the soil from which he sprang, he fashioned his verse directly out of his own experiences and the things amid which he was born and bred. He is thus the faithful interpreter of the Scottish peasant folk—of their thoughts, feelings, joys, sorrows, passions, superstitions, racy humour, homespun philosophy—even of their lawlessness and debaucheries.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college;
It kindles wit, it waukens lear,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky-gill, or penny wheep,
Or onie stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinkin' deep,
To kittle up our notion,
By night or day.—*The Holy Fair.*

After his songs, such masterpieces in little of vivid description, rollicking fun, and pungent satire as *The Jolly Beggars*, *Tam o' Shanter*, and *Holy Willie's Prayer*, show his genius at its highest.

When lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or, wavering like the bauckie-bird,
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies:
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted an' they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle rang.—*The Jolly Beggars.*

His best work is almost entirely in his Scots poetry; that written in standard English has generally by contrast too "literary" a flavour, while it often falls into the artificial mannerisms of the time. This criticism even applies to some extent to his most ambitious effort, *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, a poem in Spenserian stanzas, and partly in Scots, partly in English. Though by no means the unlettered ploughman of popular fancy — for he read widely and critically — Burns was little influenced, and not at all for good, by standard English literature. His poetic ancestry is rather to be sought among his Scottish predecessors, especially Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, and in the folk-poetry of the Scottish peasantry. More than any other poet of his age, he brought the passion of the natural man —the passion of war, of conviviality, of love—into our verse. His essentially democratic quality must also be emphasized. He was much affected by the revolutionary stir of thought in the closing decades of the century. A European note thus finds its way into his poetry, which is full of the worth of natural simple manhood, irrespective of caste and place: "The rank is but the guinea's stamp; the man's the gowd for a' that." His broad geniality and the tender sensibility which overflowed from him to the humblest things in nature—the mountain daisy, the mouse, the hunted hare—are aspects of this all-embracing human



1. Birthplace of Robert Burns.
2. Ioway Church.
3. Statue of Burns at Ayr.
4. The Ban s of "Bonnie Doon."

feeling. His work as a whole is an admirable embodiment of his poetic creed, as summed up in his *Epistle to John Lapraik :*

> Give me ae spark o' Nature's fire,
> That's a' the learning I desire ;
> Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
> At pleugh or cart,
> My Muse, though hamely in attire,
> May touch the heart.

But it should also be noted that he is a great poetic artist—the greatest poetic genius of later Scottish literature. He has a classic sense of style, and his best lyrics are as flawless as a song of Catullus. He has attained the reward which always follows perfection, and certain of his writings have become a part of the mind of the English-speaking world to an extent scarcely paralleled save by Shakespeare.

GEORGE CRABBE (1754–1832)

Life and Character.—George Crabbe was born in 1754 at Aldeburgh, Suffolk, where his father was a collector of salt dues and part owner of a fishing-boat. He received a fair elementary education ; was apprenticed in 1768 to a surgeon, and for a time practised medicine in his native town. His work, however, was distasteful to him, and in 1780 he removed to London to try his fortunes in literature. Disappointments awaited him, and he was at the end of his resources when he was rescued from his misery by the kindness of Burke, who got Dodsley to publish his poem *The Library* (1781). The same year he took orders, and afterwards held various livings successively and (for his views concerning pluralities were of the laxest) together. He married in 1783, and in 1792 inherited a fortune from his wife's uncle. His last cure was at Trowbridge, where he settled in 1814, and where he died in 1832. Crabbe was a man of hot temper, strong prejudices, and rather hard nature, but he mellowed greatly in the latter part of his life, and at Trowbridge he endeared himself to his flock.

Works.—*The Candidate* (1780) ; *The Library* (1781) ; *The Village* (1783) ; *The Newspaper* (1785) ; *The Parish Register* (1807) ; *The Borough* (1810) ; *Tales in Verse* (1812) ; *Tales of the Hall* (1819).

Characteristics.—Crabbe is the great realist of English poetry. He takes his subjects from actual life (mainly from the life of the middle and lower classes), and his imagination handles them in a hard, literal way. Uncompromising adherence to visible truth is his guiding principle. He thus stands in conscious antagonism to that traditional arcadianism which still lingered among the conventions of polite literature : " I paint the cot, as truth will paint it, and as bards will not " (*The Village*). His reaction against the poetic falsification of life carried him, however, to the opposite extreme. He dwells almost too much upon the dark and

sordid aspects of human nature; he emphasizes the evil of the world with monotonous iteration. Temperament and the harsh experiences of his youth go far, of course, to explain his point of view. But his method was also the result of deliberation and moral purpose. "The true physician walks the foulest ward" (*Parish Register*), but he does so in the interests of humanity.

> It would be as foolish and even malevolent to talk of human miseries as to describe wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, but these are described that they may be healed, and our afflictions that just inferences may be deduced from them, and proper applications be made for their dispersion.—*Sermon*, 1804.

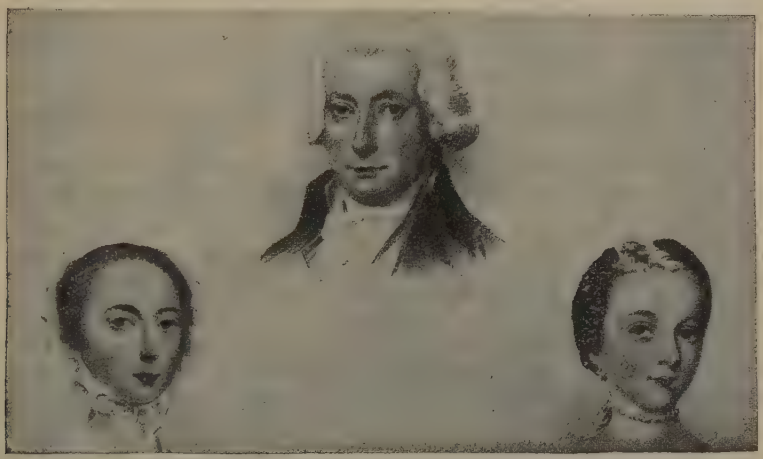
Against these limitations may be set the charm of the narrative style, in which he depicts the incidents of domestic life and the beauties of familiar landscape; and also the observation and delicacy of his humorous passages. He is one of the natural story-tellers; and his artistic sense is shown by the resolution with which he could re-write a whole tale when the metre of the first version failed to express his intuition as perfectly as he wished.

Though Crabbe lived through the period of the great Romantic revival, little or no trace of the influence of this is to be detected in his matter, spirit, or style: his work, save for the increase in geniality already mentioned, remaining much the same in the *Tales of the Hall* as it had been in *The Newspaper*. One curious feature of his conservatism is his fidelity to the classic couplet. After 1798 he experimented in other metres, as in the Spenserian introduction to *The Birth of Flattery* and the octosyllabic *Sir Eustace Gray*; but these exceptions count for little in the great mass of his verse. On the whole, too, he adhered to the formal regularity of the 18th-century couplet, though this is to some extent broken in his latest writings, in part perhaps through growing carelessness, in part by the natural pressure of his minutely detailed descriptions and the demands of the dialogue, and in part again as a result of a renewed study of Dryden. It should be noted that while Crabbe was but little indebted to other writers of verse, his work shows that the influences behind prose fiction were now finding their way into poetry.

WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800)

Life.—William Cowper was born on November 26, 1731, at Great Berkhampstead, Herts, of which his father was rector, and was educated at Westminster. On leaving school he was articled to an attorney, and in 1754 was called to the bar. During this period he fell in love with his cousin Theodora; but her father, Ashley Cowper, refused to countenance his suit, and the disappointment greatly affected his sensitive nature. Family influence secured for him a sinecure appointment as a Commissioner of Bankrupts, and in 1763 he was named Clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords. To qualify for this, however, he had to undergo formal scrutiny at the bar of the House; horror of the ordeal brought on his first

attack of insanity ; and after several attempts at suicide, he was removed to a private asylum at St. Albans. On his restoration to health he went to live (1765) at Huntingdon, where he soon became an inmate of the household of the Unwin family. On Mr. Unwin's death in 1767 his widow and her two children removed to Olney. Cowper went with them, and there he fell under the influence of John Newton, curate-in-charge of that place. With Newton he collaborated in the *Olney Hymns* (published 1779). His mental condition was, however, still unstable, and in 1773–4 he suffered from a protracted attack of religious melancholia. To occupy his mind he presently began to write poetry, and after the publication of two volumes of original verse undertook a translation of Homer (completed 1791). On the advice of a friend, Lady Hesketh, he and Mrs. Unwin migrated from Olney to a



Portraits of Cowper, Mrs. Unwin, and Lady Austen.
(From the lid of Mrs. Unwin's work-box, now in the Cowper Museum at Olney.)

healthier home at Weston-Underwood, Norfolk. But despite improved surroundings, his last years were years of almost unbroken misery. Mrs. Unwin was paralytic from 1791 to her death in 1796 ; he himself was in a state of hopeless dejection. Convinced that he was doomed to eternal damnation (see his last original poem, the terrible *Castaway*), he sank into deeper and deeper gloom ; but peace seems to have come suddenly at the end. He died on April 25, 1800.

Character.—Cowper's life is one of the most tragic in the annals of English literature. He was shy, shrinking, morbidly sensitive ; the shadow of insanity lay heavy across his path, and unfortunately religion, instead of bringing consolation, only added to his distress. Yet notwithstanding the monastic narrowness of his life and the hard and self-centred quality of his Calvinistic creed, the beauty and charm of his character remained unspoilt. His poems and his delightful letters attest his

tender love of man and nature, his broad sympathies, and the playful humour which even religious fanaticism was powerless to destroy.

Works.—His first volume of *Poems* (1782) is mainly composed of didactic pieces and satires—*Table Talk, Progress of Error, Truth, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Conversation, Retirement.* In matter, as their titles show, these are in general harmony with the taste of the time. In form, too, they belong to the outgoing order of things, for they are all in the classic couplet, which, though rather more freely handled than by the imitators of Pope, adheres to the established model; while, in spite of their greater simplicity, they have still to be classed in respect of style with the artificial poetry of the century.

> With caution taste the sweet Circean cup,
> He that drinks often at last drinks it up.
> Habits are soon assumed, but when we strive
> To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
> Called to the temple of impure delight,
> He that abstains, and he alone, does right.—*The Progress of Error.*

As a satirist, the recluse poet suffers from insufficient knowledge of men and the world; but when he is upon familiar ground (as in the description of a fashionable call in *Conversation*) he writes with vigour and effect. His account of English poetry in *Table Talk*, with its plea for nature and its well-known reference to Pope (who had "made poetry a mere mechanic art"), has a personal value. Among minor poems in the volume are the *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk*, and the spirited *Boadicea*. *The Task* (1785) is a discursive didactic poem in six books of blank verse, in which, with little order or sequence, Cowper writes of himself, his surroundings, and his opinions in general of men and things. The theology of the poem is that of the poet's sect; its broader philosophy, its social and political speculations, and the love of nature which pervades it, are his own. Structural backbone *The Task* has none; but it has a certain unity of purpose and meaning. "Except the fifth book, which is rather of a political character," Cowper himself declared, "the whole has one tendency, to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue." This underlying purpose is crystallized in the famous line, "God made the country, and man made the town." To *The Task* were added in the 1785 volume *An Epistle to Joseph Hill, Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools* (a return to the manner of the earlier poems), and the ever-popular *John Gilpin*. Among poems included in subsequent editions of his works or posthumously published may be mentioned *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture, On the Loss of the Royal George, To Mary*, the *Lines written under the Influence of Delirium* (that is, during his first fit of madness), and *The Castaway*, already referred to.

Characteristics.—Cowper was nearly fifty before he took up poetry in earnest; he had never been a systematic student of literature; he concerned himself little

about technique, and held that art as such has no justification save as it ministers to religion and virtue (*Table Talk*). Writing thus to express himself, he was singularly independent of theories, movements, and schools. In his first volume, indeed, he followed in the main the lines of current taste; but in *The Task* he emancipated himself from external influences, and went his own way in respect of both matter and style. His poetry is, therefore, fundamentally a poetry of immediate experience, observations, impressions, opinions; and the personal note is strong in it throughout. In view of the extreme subjectivity of romantic literature this fact is historically important. Such personal directness of treatment is the outstanding characteristic of his poetry of nature; he sees things for himself, and substitutes specific fidelity of detail for the conventional generalities of the Augustan school: "My descriptions," he declares of *The Task*, "are all from nature—not one of them second-handed."

> Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
> The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
> And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
> From morn to eve his solitary task.
> Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
> And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
> His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
> Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
> Wide scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
> With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
> Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
>
> *The Winter Morning Walk.*

As a poet of man his judgment is frequently warped by his harsh and morbid theology; but in his case "the tides of the divine life . . . moved beneath the thickest ice of theory," and he is often broader and healthier than his creed. His fine humanitarianism is, indeed, one of the most persistent features of his poetry: he proclaims the brotherhood of man; denounces slavery; speaks out boldly on the subject of war; advocates political liberty; reminds the king that he is a constitutional monarch, who must govern with the consent and for the good of his people; and attacks the Bastille as the symbol of oppression. At the same time, as with Burns, his humanitarianism embraces even the humblest forms of sentient life; he reproves the callousness of his age, and finds nothing in nature too small or obscure for his loving attention. His style is still encumbered with 18th-century mannerisms; even in *The Task* there are many lapses into "poetic diction." But despite much admixture of the old formalism, no man did more than Cowper to bring back into English poetry the accent of nature and sincerity.

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Chapter 12. THE LANGUAGE

The 18th century may be taken as representing the first period of Modern English proper as distinct from Early Modern, the outside limits of the period extending from the beginnings of a new literary and standard usage about 1660 to the early 19th century. The transition stage between the first and second periods terminated about 1830, by which time the changes in spelling and pronunciation which took place about 1800 were fully established, and the literary usages of the 18th century had passed out of fashion.

The Literary Usage.—The new usage which came into fashion after the Restoration continued to dominate the early 18th century. Literary style and diction continued to be plain and unrhetorical, and to reflect the spoken usage of town life. Addison's prose style marks an advance in the direction of greater elegance and refinement, but it is in close touch with the everyday speech of fashionable people, as is the poetic diction of Pope. The more colloquial and informal speech of the less fashionable classes is represented in the writings of Defoe, and to some extent in Swift. A similar contrast may be observed between Richardson and Fielding. Towards the middle of the century a reaction in favour of a more elevated and erudite mode of writing set in, heralded by Johnson, who aimed at a more rhetorical diction than the "middle style" of Addison. Compare Johnson's criticism of Addison (*Lives of the Poets*):

> His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; . . . always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or painted sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace; he seeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations.

The more elevated style is seen in the prose of Burke and Gibbon. In poetry also it replaced the plainer usage of Pope, and continued in fashion, modified more and more by the ideals of the romantic movement, until ultimately displaced by new literary theories and experiments, such as the poetic diction of Wordsworth or Keats, or the prose of De Quincey or Lamb.

The Spoken Usage.—Eighteenth-century changes in pronunciation depend in the main on class usage. Thus the pronunciation of *ē* (M.E. open *ē*) as *ī* in words like *clean, meat* [*klīn, mīt*] existed before 1600, but did not apparently become the standard usage for some time after 1700, and Pope's rhymes *seat : fate, heat : estate, tea : obey, away,* show that he favoured the conservative usage. The rhymes *great : state, break : make* (Pope), beside *great : heat* (Dryden), *great : seat* (Rowe) perhaps show that the modern pronunciation of *break, great,* is a survival of the earlier fashion. The old pronunciation of *oi* (representing Early Modern *ui*) as *ai* in *boil, join, spoil,*

toil, poison, etc., did not become vulgar until the end of the century—*cf. boil : beguile* (Spenser), *spoil : defile* (Dryden), *join : divine* (Pope), *toil : smile* (Johnson). The fashionable pronunciation of *oblige* was the French—*cf.* Pope, *besieged : obliged*. The modern standard impure (*i.e.*, diphthongal) pronunciation of long vowels, as in *make, bone, toe* [meik, boun, tou], came in at the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century, and is noted already in 1809 by Batchelor.[1]

Smart (1836)[2] speaks of the London pronunciation of these vowels as "not quite simple" but "apt to contract toward the end"; so *ē* in make, etc., "finishes more slenderly than it begins, tapering, so to speak, towards the sound of *ē*" (*i.e.* *ĭ*).

The necessity for a standard pronunciation was much urged in the 18th century. In 1766 Buchanan published his *Essay towards Establishing a Standard for an Elegant and Uniform Pronunciation of the English Language throughout the British Dominions*, and his work was succeeded by the pronouncing dictionaries of Sheridan (1780), Nares (1784), and Walker (1791).

Spelling.—A standard spelling was finally fixed by Johnson's Dictionary (1755), almost the only change since being the substitution of *c* for *ck* in words like *antic, music*, at the beginning of the 19th century.

Cf. Pegge, *Anecdotes of the English Language* (1814): "It is now the *ton* to write physic, music, public, etc., without the old final letter *k*, which no schoolboy dared to have done with impunity forty years ago." That English spelling presented difficulties is clear from Franklin's *Scheme for a New Alphabet and Reformed Spelling* (1768), and also from earlier writers. Thus Jones, *Practical Phonography, or New Art of Rightly Speling* [sic] *and Writing Words by the Sound thereof*, contains the rule: "All words which can be sounded several ways must be written according to the hardest, harshest, longest, and most unusual sound."

Vocabulary and Syntax.—The common use of slang or colloquial abbreviations is satirized by Swift in the *Tatler* (No. 230) as among "the late refinements crept into our language." Examples are "mobb," "incog," "plenipo," "I'd h' brot 'um," "bamboozl," "banter," "sham," etc. French words, especially military terms, were still freely used.

Addison in the *Spectator* (No. 165) complains that "the present war has so adulterated our tongue with strange words," and gives a letter "very modishly chequered with this modern military eloquence" (e.g., *reconnoitre, maraud, defile, corps*, etc.). Steele's "Humble Petition of Who and Which" in the *Spectator* (1711) reflects on the exaggerated use of *that* as a relative.

In the latter part of the century a number of Celtic words were introduced through the Ossianic fashion, such as *bard, brogue, whiskey, plaid, shamrock*.

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[1] T. Batchelor, *An Orthoëpical Analysis of the English Language* (London, 1809).
[2] B. H. Smart, *Pronouncing Dictionary*, based on Walker (London, 1836).

SECTION VI
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

General View—The Democratic Movement—The Scientific Movement—The Spiritual Revival

The Democratic Movement. — The century opened in the midst of widespread disturbance caused by the French Revolution and the events which had followed. The enthusiasm with which the " glorious outburst " of '89 had been welcomed by many in this country, especially among the ardent spirits of the younger generation, had already waned, and the excesses of the Reign of Terror and the military ambitions of the Republic had brought about a sweeping change in English thought. This change was completed by the long struggle with Napoleon. Waterloo delivered Europe from the despotism of the Great Adventurer, but at the same time it marked the triumph of the forces of reaction ; and though the democratic ideas generated by the Revolution were by no means destroyed, progress all over Europe was definitely checked. In England men's minds were still haunted by the spectre of anarchy, and for some years there was no further talk of constitutional reform.

Meanwhile, however, vast new economic forces had come into play, and England was being rapidly transformed from an agricultural and mercantile into an industrial nation. The far-reaching social changes wrought by this transformation made political reorganization an imperative necessity, and at length the first step was taken in the Reform Act of 1832, by which the political monopoly of the territorial oligarchy was broken and a large share of their power transferred to the middle classes, the representatives of commerce and capital. It was intended by those who passed this measure that it should be definitive. But the working classes in turn began to clamour for recognition, and the agitation for the further extension of the franchise that ensued was powerfully reinforced by industrial depression. Hence the Chartist movement of 1837–49, with its demand for manhood suffrage and other Radical reforms. Chartism died out under the influence of improved industrial conditions ; but the extension of the franchise, though delayed, came in time, and the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884–5 register the steady onward sweep of English democracy.

The purely political aspects of the democratic movement are, however, of less moment to us here than its indirect effects on the fabric and temper of society.

The social consciousness was deeply stirred; the old sharp dividing lines between class and class began to be obliterated; increasing attention was given to the claims of the masses as against those of the privileged few; humanitarianism spread, and the sphere of legislation was enlarged to include the amelioration of the conditions of labour and of the poor. Some advance was made towards the breaking up of social conventions and the increase of freedom for thought and action; and, more important still, a movement began for the emancipation of women. Much of the literature of the Victorian age is the direct expression of these new social enthusiasms and ideals.

The development of popular education, though very slow, was yet another significant accompaniment, part cause and part effect, of democratic progress. So, too, was the diffusion of knowledge through the newspapers (the number and circulation of which increased enormously after the abolition of the Stamp Duty in 1855 and the Paper Duty in 1861), in magazines, and in cheap books. Even the humblest were thus made partakers in the larger intellectual life of their time, and ideas and speculations which would otherwise have been limited to the aristocracy of culture became the common property of the multitude. An ever-widening public for literature was thus opened up, with results to literature itself too numerous and complex to be considered in a mere epitome.

The Scientific Movement.—Not less important than the advance of democracy during the 19th century was the corresponding advance of science, to which nothing in previous history affords a parallel. Decade by decade men penetrated more and more deeply into the secrets of the universe, adding fact to fact and generalization to generalization; decade by decade they gained more and more control over the forces of nature. On the practical side—in the application of science to life in factory, railway, steamship, and in the multitudinous uses of electricity—the result was a complete transformation of the world. No less complete was the revolution effected in the domain of thought. In matter and spirit alike literature was profoundly affected by this "march of mind" and the new ideas which it brought in its train. Directly, it showed the influence of science in the realistic tendency which for a time was dominant. Fiction and history alike became scientific. The poets, from Tennyson to Meredith, were continuously engaged in reconciling the revelations of science with human idealism.

The Spiritual Disturbance and Revival.—While not wholly responsible for it (for powerful disintegrating forces were at work within the edifice of faith itself), the scientific movement was in large measure the cause of the great religious upheaval of the Victorian age. New knowledge and old dogmas came into fierce conflict; the ancient system of thought was shaken at its foundations; traditional landmarks were swept away; intelligent men of all sects and classes were deeply stirred by the spirit of speculation and unrest. Hence the scepticism, the continual heart-searchings,

the widespread melancholy which are among the persistent features of higher Victorian literature, and the strenuous moral spirit which makes it so different as a whole from the literature of the age of Elizabeth or of the first half of the 18th century. Hence, too, the strong reaction against the domination of science in many quarters; the religious revivals initiated in the High Church movement; and outside the Church itself, the unceasing protest of some of the greatest poets and prose-writers against the materialism to which science seemed to lead. That protest had two sides. On the one hand, it was inspired by hostility to the mechanical and godless view of the world which appeared to be sapping the bases of all religious faith. On the other hand, it was directed against the hardness and ugliness which had come to characterize life in a commercial, utilitarian, and comfortable age. The renaissance of art and a fresh outburst of romanticism were the most conspicuous expressions of this newly awakened sense of beauty. The fact that both æstheticism and romanticism soon became intimately connected with social reform attests the ever-growing influence of social ideas during the period with which we are now to be concerned.

Chapter 2. THE POETS

Wordsworth—Coleridge—Scott—Byron—Shelley—Keats—Southey—Landor

WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

Life.—William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, Cumberland, on April 7, 1770, and was educated at Hawkshead Grammar School and at Cambridge. In the summer vacation of 1790 he made a pedestrian tour through France and Switzerland, and in November 1791 returned to France to study, spending nearly a year at Orleans and Blois. He formed a liaison with a Frenchwoman during this stay, and by her had the daughter who is probably addressed in the famous sonnet beginning

William Wordsworth.
(From the painting by Frank Pickersgill.)

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.

He was now an ardent supporter of the Revolution, and was deterred only by the interference of friends at home from joining the Girondins and probably sharing their fate. Returning to England he published (1793) *An Evening Walk*, dealing with the landscape round Hawkshead and Ambleside, and *Descriptive Sketches*, the materials of which were furnished by his Continental travels. Both these poems are in the classic couplet and

in the current poetic style, though the large amount of specific detail in the descriptions separates them from the common run of 18th-century landscape verse. Meanwhile the course of events in France alienated his sympathies, and the rise of Napoleon completed the overthrow of his revolutionary faith. A legacy of £900 (1795) made him independent, and he resolved to devote himself entirely to literature. He went to live at Alfoxden in Somerset, and there formed a close friendship with Coleridge, with whom he published a volume of verse, *Lyrical Ballads*, in 1798. After a winter in Germany (1798–9), he settled in the Lake district, first at Grasmere, then at Allan Bank, and finally (1813) at Rydal Mount. He had married Mary Hutchinson in 1802. For many years he continued to write and publish poetry, though the public was indifferent and the critics were contemptuous. Little by little, however, opinion began to change in his favour; the universities of Durham and Oxford honoured him with degrees; his name was placed on the Civil Pension list; in 1843 he succeeded Southey as poet laureate. He died March 23, 1850.

Rydal Mount.
(Photo by G. P. Abraham.)

Works. — Wordsworth's principal publications are:

VERSE. — *An Evening Walk* (1793); *Descriptive Sketches* (1793); *Lyrical Ballads* (1798); *The Excursion* (1814); *Poems* (first collective eds., 1807 and 1815); *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815); *Peter Bell* (1819); *The Waggoner* (1819); *The River Duddon*, a series of sonnets (1820); *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (1822); *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (1822); *The Prelude* (1850); *The Recluse* (posthumous, 1888).

PROSE.—*Apology for the French Revolution, in a Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793; posthumously published); *Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal to each other, and to the common enemy, at this crisis; and specifically as affected by the Convention of Cintra* (1809); *Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmoreland* (1818); *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes* (1822; 5th ed., 1835, as *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*); *Kendal and Windermere Railway: Two Letters* (1844).

Character.—Wordsworth was a man of austere temper, self-centred, a little stiff and hard, a little too conscious of his genius and his mission, and not rich in

the saving grace of humour. His extreme preoccupation with himself and his own work, and his want of varied contact with men in the broad highways of public life, narrowed his outlook; while his solitary habits, his long contempt of the critics, and the adulation of a few worshippers combined to make him more and more self-centred. Yet this isolation was itself part of his greatness; he remained to the end simple and utterly transparent of soul, calmly indifferent to wealth and vulgar ambitions, with (as Carlyle said) "a fine wholesome rusticity" about him, "fresh as his own mountain breezes." Absolute sincerity was the keynote of his character, and the "plain living and high thinking" which he taught were the rule of his own life. Little of a bookman, he spent his days in the open air, and most of his poetry was composed out of doors.

Views.—Wordsworth believed in the didactic power of poetry:

> Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing.
> *Letter to Beaumont.*

He had the firmest faith in the moral influence of his own poems:

> To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous: this is their office.—*Letter to Lady Beaumont.*

As poet-moralist he kept his attention fixed steadily on his two great themes: Nature and Man.

> On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
> Musing in solitude . . .—*Recluse.*

Nature.—Very early in life he resolved to become a poet of Nature in a new and distinctive sense. Of a description in his *Evening Walk* he writes:

> I recollect the very spot where this struck me. . . . The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply, in some degree, this deficiency.

To this resolution he remained faithful, his poetry everywhere testifying to the minute care with which he watched and brooded over every detail of the landscape amid which his life was spent. Remarkable as is the fidelity of his nature poetry, however, this is not its most characteristic feature. What is distinctive in his interpretation of Nature is its highly religious quality. Mystical in temper and fundamentally opposed to all forms of philosophy which assume the intellect to be the only organ of truth, he believed that the spiritual faculty in man gives immediate access to a world of divine reality which mere reason can never reach. Such access is found through communion with Nature. The child, holding the shell to his ear, hears in it murmurs of the great ocean.

Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of faith.—*Excursion*, iv.

Thus if we go to Nature in the right mood—the mood of "wise passiveness"—taking with us, not the "meddling intellect," but "a heart that watches and receives," we shall find Nature the greatest of all teachers.

Man.—As a youth Wordsworth was carried away by the humanitarian promises of the Revolution. The collapse of his early utopian faith was followed by a period of great mental disturbance, and though through the influence of his sister Dorothy and the soothing power of nature he was won back to confidence in God and men, he never returned to his Radical creed. The extreme conservatism of his later life is shown in his profound distrust of material progress and the new industrialism, in his opposition to the Reform Bill of 1832 and Catholic emancipation, and in his protest against the Kendal and Windermere Railway. Yet notwithstanding his complete change of front, his work to the end remained an essential part of the democratic movement of the age, for it was fed by a constant desire to get back to nature and reality, and by the deepest reverence for the worth and dignity of plain, simple manhood.

The Subject and Language of Poetry.—His chosen theme was indeed "no other than the very heart of man," and "men as they are within themselves"; and this essential humanity he sought among the humble rustic classes—types, like his own dalesmen, of unspoilt manhood—because he held that these were nearest to the elemental and permanent realities of human life. In the treatment of this theme he advocated the rejection of all the artifices and conventions of 18th-century verse, and the substitution of the language of actual life.

> The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems, was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe these throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language actually used by men. . . . Humble and rustic life was generally chosen because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are under less restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from these elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.—*Preface*, "*Lyrical Ballads*" (2nd ed.).

His speculations regarding "poetic diction" convinced Wordsworth "that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition." The true opposition is not between poetry and prose, but between poetry and matter of fact, or science. "The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude; the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath

and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." His aim was to bring the subject of poetry, and with it the language of poetry, long the artificial dialect of a caste, back to the realities of life.

Poems.—*The Prelude; or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, is an attempt "to record in verse the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them" (Preface to *The Excursion*). Wordsworth traces minutely his intellectual history from childhood to early manhood, and deals at length with the development of his love of Nature and the influence of the Revolution upon him. Often prolix but seldom dull, it is of great interest as an autobiography, and indispensable as an introduction to the study of his work.

The Excursion is an extremely discursive philosophical poem, in nine books of blank verse. The framework is provided by an account of a three days' ramble in the Cumberland vales: into this are introduced incidents, stories, reflections, conversations; the whole forming a vehicle for the poet's "views of Man, Nature, and Society." Much of the poem is flat, prosaic moralizing; but there are oases in the desert, like the story of Margaret in Book I.

The White Doe of Rylstone. In this romantic poem Wordsworth came to some extent into rivalry with Scott. He was anxious, however, to have it understood that whereas Scott was always concerned with external incident, he was primarily interested in the moral and religious side of his subject. *Michael*, the first of many "domestic tales" to express his sympathies, may be taken as a typical example of his narrative poems of humble life. He himself calls it a "pastoral poem," thus challenging the long-standing conventional pastoral tradition. It is a pathetic story of an old shepherd, his only son, and an unfinished sheepfold.

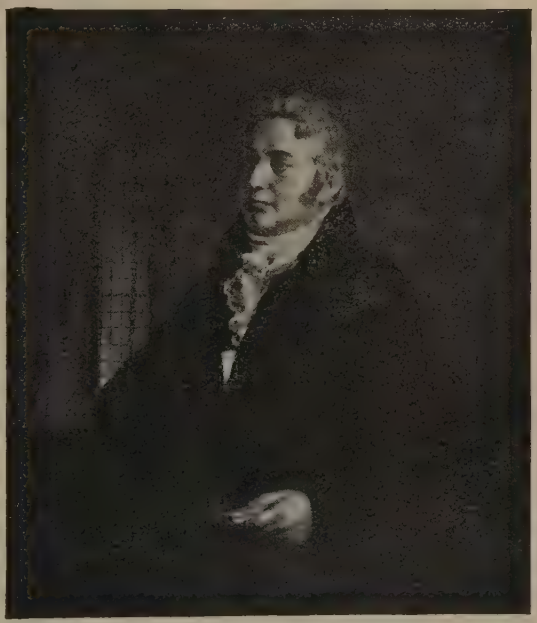
The ode, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, epitomizes briefly the Wordsworthian philosophy. The poet uses the Platonic fancy of our pre-natal existence as a premiss. The soul comes into earthly life, not a blank (as Lockian empiricism declared), but endowed with divine instincts and powers. Mundane and temporal interests encroach upon these, but cannot wholly stifle them. Even amid the distractions of the world the "shadowy recollections" of childhood mystically attest our divine origin and destiny. His sonnets form perhaps the greatest body of poetry in that form in English letters.

Characteristics.—Wordsworth was an unequal writer, and gains by selection. Even at its best his style rarely meets the threefold requirement of the Miltonic criterion: it is simple, except when it consists of mere philosophic musing not fused into poetry; more seldom is it sensuous or passionate. On the other hand, it has the fine austerity of his character, and on occasion supreme beauty, majesty, and strength. His aim was pleasure, but his moral bent was often destructive of æsthetic effect; when, as in his greatest moments, the thought of the moralist is suffused with the inspiration of the poet, he produces didactic poetry of the highest kind.

With all his limitations, therefore, he is secure of a very high and distinctive place among English poets. That place he owes in particular to his winning power as revealer of the beauty and happiness which lie about us and which habitually we have neither eyes to see nor hearts to understand. He never lost himself in the quest for utopian fancies, nor did he wander far afield after the exceptional and the romantic. He is the poet of reality—the interpreter of the divine possibilities of common people and common things.

COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

Life.—Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devon, October 21, 1772. He received his early education at Christ's Hospital, where the reading in his seventeenth year of Bowles's *Sonnets* gave him his first taste of poetry freed from the influences of classicism. At nineteen he went to Cambridge; fell into debt and despondency; ran away, and under an assumed name enlisted in the Dragoons. He soon obtained his discharge, but though he returned for a short time to Cambridge, he left (1794) without taking his degree. Inspired by the Revolution he now joined Southey in a scheme, which quickly collapsed, for the establishment of an ideal society, to be called a Pantisocracy, on the banks of the Susquehanna river. In 1795 he married Sarah (or Sara) Fricker, whose sister Edith a few weeks later became Southey's wife. In 1796 he published a volume of poems and started a periodical, which died at the tenth issue for want of funds. His friendship with Wordsworth began in 1797. After nearly two years in Germany (1798–9), during which time he steeped himself in German thought, he returned to England with many designs for great philosophical treatises but no settled plans for the immediate future. Continual ill-health and family unhappiness brought on profound depression of spirits, and in an evil hour he sought relief from bodily pain and mental anguish in laudanum.



Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
(From an engraving by Samuel Cousens.)

This completed his undoing. Henceforth for many years his life was one vain struggle against the fatal habit which had him in its grip, ceaseless wanderings in search of health, domestic discord, broken promises, and vague dreaming over vast works which were never even begun. He tried journalism, and launched a weekly paper, *The Friend*, which reached only twenty-seven numbers; he lectured on Shakespeare and other subjects with varying success. From 1816 to the end he lived almost entirely under the roof and care of Dr. Gillman at Highgate, who helped him to break the chains of his slavery to laudanum and restored him to a measure of health and happiness. In these last years he became the oracle of many pilgrims from far and near, who repaired to Highgate to listen to his marvellous talk. He died July 23, 1834.

Works.—His most important works are:

VERSE.—*Poems* (1796); *The Ancient Mariner* (in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798); Translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800); *Remorse* (1813); *Christabel, Kubla Khan*, etc. (1816); *Sibylline Leaves* (1817).

PROSE.—*The Friend* (1809–10); *The Statesman's Manual* (1816); *Biographia Literaria* (1817); *Aids to Reflection* (1825); *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* (1844); *Essay on Method* (1845); *Table Talk* (1884); *Anima Poetæ* (1895).

Character.—Coleridge is one of the most pathetic figures in our literature. He was a man of stupendous and many-sided genius and fine sensitive moral nature. But he was by temperament indolent, erratic, and visionary: ill-health and mental depression early impaired his powers of work; the laudanum habit paralysed his intellect and will, and undermined his sense of honour and self-respect. For the greater part of his life he was a mere drifter, an ineffective dreamer of dreams, a burden to his friends, and often a pensioner upon their bounty. To complete the tragedy, the knowledge of his pitiful failure weighed heavily upon him.

Views.—Coleridge began life as an ardent supporter of the Revolution, and his first volume of verse loudly proclaimed his democratic enthusiasm. But disillusion soon set in, and, like Wordsworth, he became politically a Conservative. With Wordsworth, however, a profound interest in concrete humanity survived the wreckage of his early hopes. Coleridge, though he retained his interest in the general concerns of the nation, wanted precisely that intense sympathy with individual men and women. His tendency to live among abstractions was further strengthened by his devotion to metaphysics and theology.

In his theory of poetry he emphasized the æsthetic quality as the primary consideration:

> Poetry is an art . . . of representing, in words, external nature and human thoughts and affections, both relatively to human affections, by the production of as much immediate pleasure in parts, as is compatible with the largest sum of pleasure in the whole.
>
> *Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton*, II.

The poet, therefore, must convey truth indirectly through the medium of pleasure:

> The communication of pleasure is the introductory means by which alone the poet must expect to moralize his readers.—*Biographia Literaria*, ch. xxii.

He adopts Milton's conception of poetry:

> It is essential to poetry that it should be simple, and appeal to the elements and primary laws of our nature; that it should be sensuous, and by its imagery elicit truth at a flash; that it should be impassioned, and be able to move our feelings and awaken our affections.
>
> *Lectures on Poetry, etc.*

Regarding the language of poetry, he agrees with Wordsworth's "remonstrance in behalf of truth and nature," but entirely rejects his special theories. The language of poetry must necessarily differ from that of prose, while the best language for poetic purposes is not to be found among the rustic and uneducated classes (*Biographia Literaria*, ch. xvii., xviii.).

Poems.—PERSONAL POEMS.—Among these there are several—*Dejection*, *Youth and Age*, and *Work without Hope*, in particular—which have a pathetic interest as expressions of the poet's sense of failure and sterility. Others, like *The Nightingale* and *The Lime-Tree Bower my Prison*, are touching memorials of friendship, dating from a time when life was still full of happiness and hope. *Frost at Midnight*, belonging to the same period, enshrines a father's tender love for his infant child.

POLITICAL POEMS.—In *The Destruction of the Bastille*, written before he left Christ's Hospital, Coleridge welcomed the Revolution in declamatory verse. The *Ode on the Departing Year* (1796), begins "with an address to the Divine Providence that regulates into one vast harmony all the events of time," and closes by prophesying "in a spirit of anguish" the approaching downfall of England. In *France, an Ode* (1798), first printed as *The Recantation*, Coleridge traces his relations with the Revolution and proclaims an ideal of individual liberty to be reached only through obedience to the moral law. *Fears in Solitude* was written in the same year "during the alarm of an invasion," and contains an explanation of the poet's patriotism.

ROMANTIC POEMS.—*Kubla Khan* is a fragment of wonderful pictorial and verbal magic. According to Coleridge's own account, it represents all that he could recall of a dream. On waking, he hastened to write down the lines which had come to him during sleep; unfortunately he was interrupted by "a person on business from Porlock"; after which nothing remained to him but "some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision." *Christabel*, a story of witchcraft, also unfinished, is like the foregoing a creation of rare and delicate beauty. Part I. was written in 1797, Part II. in 1800, after which Coleridge waited in vain for a return of the inspiration. Its versification, though not in fact so original as he supposed, gave a fresh model to English poetry.

> The metre . . . is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables

> Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four.—*Preface.*

Scott, who heard *Christabel* recited while it was still in manuscript, was influenced by it in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. *The Ancient Mariner* is the tale of a curse which the narrator, the Mariner himself, brings down upon himself and his companions by wantonly killing an albatross. Coleridge's power of handling the supernatural is, like the pure music of his verse, as wonderful here as in *Christabel*. The moral involved in the story and specifically brought out at the end, is that of all-embracing love.

Characteristics.—Coleridge's poetry represents the culmination of romanticism in its purest form. Historically, he belongs to the mediæval revival; but he is far too original to be classed merely as part of a movement, and the distinctive qualities of his work are all his own. In pictorial power, felicity of phrasing, and word music he is one of the great masters. In his subtly suggestive treatment of the supernatural he stands almost alone. It is not only that he eliminates from his supernaturalism the crude material horrors then popular with writers of the romantic school: he also gives it a psychological foundation. In describing the plan of *Lyrical Ballads* he writes:

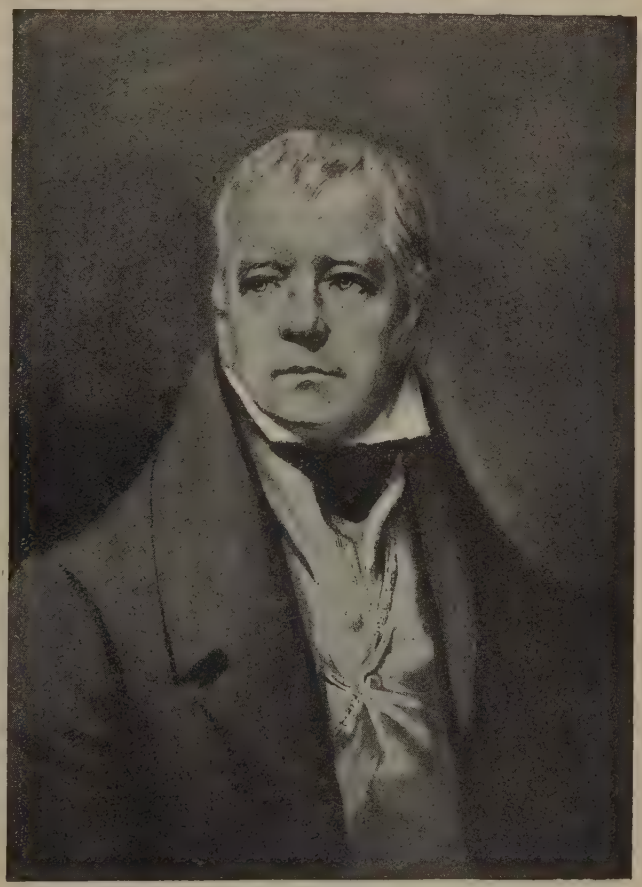
> It was agreed that my endeavour should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of the imagination that willing suspension of belief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith.—*Biographia Literaria*, ch. xiv.

This is particularly apparent in *The Ancient Mariner*, the backbone of which is provided, not by the marvels of the narrative, but by the spiritual history of the hero. Wordsworth sought to save naturalism from the hard literalism of Crabbe by touching reality with imagination. Coleridge redeemed romance from coarse sensationalism by linking it with psychological truth.

Coleridge's best poetry is almost entirely the product of a brief period of wonderful activity (1797–9). Yet small as it is in bulk, it ranks among the rarest treasures of our literature. As a literary critic he is unsystematic, but stimulating and suggestive. He did much to establish the romantic attitude towards literature, and he gave an entirely new direction to English Shakespearean criticism. Though rambling, discursive, and unsatisfying as a whole, his *Biographia Literaria* contains some chapters which for penetration and grasp of fundamental principles could not easily be surpassed. In philosophy and theology he is to be reckoned a chief force in breaking down the rationalistic tradition of the 18th century and impregnating English contemporary thought with German transcendentalism. By his scattered writings, and even more by his talk, he exercised an enormous influence over many young men who were to be spiritual leaders in the next generation.

SCOTT (1771–1832)

Life.—Connected on both sides of his house with families which had figured conspicuously in the annals of the Border, Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. As a child he spent much time at his grandfather's farm at Sandy-Knowe, where he drank in the romantic associations of the country round Smailholm Castle and the songs and tales of Border feuds and Jacobite risings with which his grandmother and aunt beguiled the winter evenings. He was educated at the Edinburgh High School and University, was admitted a member of the faculty of advocates in 1792, and in 1799 married Charlotte Carpenter (or Charpentier), the daughter of a French refugee. He began his literary career with translations from the German and some ballads. In 1802–4 appeared his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, largely composed of materials collected during many "forays" into Liddesdale. An offshoot from this, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, was published in 1805, and was followed during the next ten years by other romances in verse. Then exhaustion of the vein and Byron's rivalry caused him to seek a new opening for his genius, and this he opportunely found in prose fiction. He was made a baronet in 1820. The failure in the winter of 1825–6 of the publishing house of Constable, in whose fortunes he was directly involved, entailed his ruin. Refusing to take shelter



Sir Walter Scott.
(From the painting by Sir Henry Raeburn.)

behind the Bankruptcy Act ("for this I would in a Court of Honour deserve to lose my spurs"), he set himself the gigantic task of wiping off by his pen debts amounting to nearly £130,000, and, despite the collapse of his health, kept up the heroic struggle to the end. A journey to Italy failed to restore him, and he was brought home to die (September 21, 1832) within sound of his beloved Tweed.

Works in Verse.—Of these the principal are: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805); *Marmion* (1808); *The Lady of the Lake* (1810); *Rokeby* (1813); *The Lord of the Isles* (1815); *The Bridal of Triermain* (1815); *Harold the Dauntless* (1816). (For Scott's prose works, see pp. 451–6.)

Character.—Scott was a fine piece of sterling and healthy manhood. Rigorously tried by the extremes of prosperity and adversity, he came unscathed out of the double ordeal; for his amazing success did not spoil him, and he met overwhelming disaster with splendid courage. Simple-minded, unaffected, generous to a fault, he was entirely free from the minor failings to which the artistic temperament is supposed to be prone; as for the weightier matters of the law, it is enough to say that in his case we have not to fall back upon the dangerous principle that genius is incompatible with the discharge of ordinary domestic and social duty. The weak spot in his character was his love of money. Yet it was not mere wealth that he craved. Money was for him but a means to an end—the realization of his one great ambition to found a family of the Abbotsford Scotts. Not the amassing of a fortune, but the translation into fact of this romantic and feudal dream, was the dominant purpose of his life, and in the end it proved his ruin.

Views.—Scott's strong political Toryism does not much concern the student of his poetry, but as a sentiment it is important as revealing the tone and bias of his mind. He loved the past, and in imagination clung to it; he idealized the old order, rudely shaken by the Revolution. This attitude deeply coloured his whole view of life, though his massive common sense prevented him from becoming a reactionary. While his lameness (and this alone) kept him from a life of action, it was the life of action that he always held in supreme regard. He had no transcendental notions about the value of literature, and certainly did not believe that the pen is mightier than the sword; he thought little of literature as a profession, despised "literary" society, and made very light of his own great achievements in verse and prose. His taste in poetry was catholic, for while he revelled in everything romantic, he admired Dryden, enjoyed Crabbe, and regarded the *Vanity of Human Wishes* as one of the noblest things in English literature. But in his own poetry, obedient to the instincts of his genius, he ignored the traditions of "epic composition," and produced instead what he described as romantic tales (Advertisement to *Marmion*). The Introduction to Canto III. of *Marmion* gives an account of the influences by which his mind had been moulded in childhood, and

concludes with the assertion that from one so nurtured it were vain to expect "the classic poet's well-conn'd task."

Poems.—*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is an expanded ballad of Border feuds and enchantments. The tradition of the goblin page, with which Scott began, dropped into the background as the work grew into a description of 16th-century manners, and in the end became a mere excrescence on the story. For the free movement of the verse Scott was indebted to Coleridge's *Christabel*.

Marmion is the most brilliant of the verse romances. "The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but it is called a Tale of

Abbotsford and the Eildon Hills.
(Photo by Valentine.)

Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the cause which led up to it" (Advertisement to first edition). In this combination of "private adventures" with history, Scott strikes out a method which he often used in his novels.

The Lady of the Lake, while wanting the romantic freshness of the *Lay* and the tragic intensity of *Marmion*, has qualities which have gained for it greater popularity than either—the real interest of its love-story, its picturesque transcripts of manners, and the sympathetic handling of its central characters. Its descriptions of scenery round Loch Katrine are justly famous.

In *Rokeby* the scene is laid in Yorkshire, and the period is that of the Civil War, though practically no use is made of the manners of the time. It will not bear comparison with its predecessors; its descriptions are more conventional, its narrative relatively tame. Scott said that he intended in it to make character portrayal for the first time the central point of interest. The chief figures are indeed far more realistically handled than heretofore—a feature which suggests that he was unconsciously gravitating, not towards the drama, as Joanna Baillie told him, but towards the novel.

The Lord of the Isles, a tale of the Bruce, was written, as he admitted, as a task; *The Bridal of Triermain*, a graceful love-story, shorter and slighter than the other verse romances, and *Harold the Dauntless*, a poem with a good deal of the Viking spirit, are of minor importance.

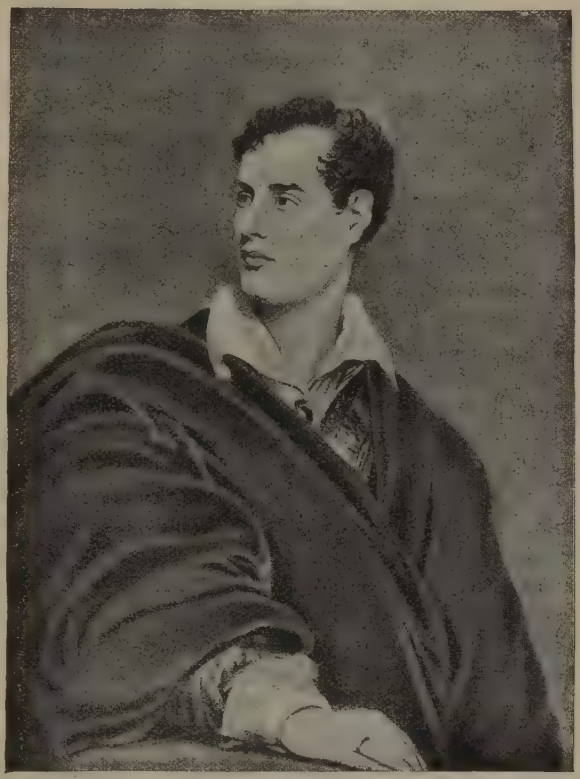
Characteristics.—As a poet Scott is bold, rapid, and free. He has essentially "the balladist's mind" (some of his ballads are of great excellence), and knows how to tell a tale. But his wonderful facility with the octosyllabic couplet was a constant snare, and he is often careless, diffuse, and commonplace. He catches with extraordinary success the dramatic picturesqueness of his subjects, but he has little power of penetrating to the motives and passions which lie behind his action; there is nothing mystical or subtle in his verse; he carries with him an astonishingly light weight of thought; his moralizings are of the tritest. He is at his best in scenes of stirring action, as in the really great battle-pieces in *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. His descriptions are often done in clear and simple outlines, but at times they are overloaded with topographical and archæological detail. In his treatment of nature he is emphatically the poet of association; all his landscapes are steeped in the historic or legendary interest of the past.

Scott's place in the evolution of English poetry is that of the first great popular exponent of the revival of the romantic past. As such his influence was enormous, though it was afterwards overshadowed by that exerted by his novels. Deficient in intellectual and spiritual power, and in some of the higher qualities of art, he cannot be ranked among our greatest poets. But what he did he did supremely well.

BYRON (1788–1824)

Life.—George Gordon Noel, Lord Byron, was born in London on January 22, 1788. His father, Captain Byron ("Mad Jack"), died in 1791, having squandered his wife's fortune, and the child was left to the care of his mother, a silly woman of uncertain temper, by whom he was alternately ill-treated and spoiled. On the death of his grand-uncle, "the wicked lord," in 1798, he succeeded to the title and family estates. He entered Harrow in 1801, and passed thence in 1805 to Cambridge, where he led an irregular life. His first book, *Hours of Idleness*, was unfavourably received by the critics, and he replied in a satire, *English Bards and*

Scotch Reviewers (1809). Two years of Continental travel (1809–11) resulted in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and he "awoke and found himself famous." A number of highly coloured Oriental romances followed, which gained for him a popularity surpassing even that lately enjoyed by Scott. In 1815 he married Anne Isabella Milbanke. Their separation next year and the scandal which ensued caused a sudden revulsion in general feeling, and the public, which had idolized him, now loaded him with abuse. He left England an embittered man, and after a sojourn in Switzerland, where he formed a friendship with Shelley, settled in Italy. In the end, tired of everything —of dissipation, fame, life, himself—he threw himself into the cause of Greece, then struggling against the Turks, and died of fever at Missolonghi, April 19, 1824.



Lord Byron.

Works. — Byron's principal publications are: *Hours of Idleness* (1807); *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809); *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–16); *The Giaour* (1813); *The Bride of Abydos* (1814); *The Corsair* (1814); *Lara* (1814); *Hebrew Melodies* (1815); *The Siege of Corinth* (1816); *Parisina* (1816); *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816); *Beppo* (1817); *Manfred* (1817); *Mazeppa* (1819); *Don Juan* (1819–24); *Marino Faliero* (1820); *Sardanapalus* (1821); *The Two Foscari* (1821); *Cain* (1821); *The Vision of Judgment* (1822); *Werner* (1822); *The Deformed Transformed* (1824); *The Island* (1824).

Character.—Byron sprang from a wild stock; he inherited from his parents a turbulent and unstable nature; and all the circumstances of his early life tended to make him proud, passionate, wilful, cynical, and misanthropic. A colossal egotist, he demanded from the world more than the world can give even to its most favoured sons; he drank deep of its cup of sensual pleasure, and paid the penalty in

the inevitable satiety. At the same time he had noble impulses, and was capable of disinterested friendships and generous enthusiasms. In judging his character ample allowance must always be made for legendary exaggerations for which he was himself largely responsible. Childishly vain, he loved to pose before the world as the typical romantic hero, victimized by fate and wrapped in mystery and gloom. Even his vices were magnified by his habit of fanfaronade. His "Byronic" melancholy, which laid so powerful a spell upon his contemporaries and deeply affected all European literature, though fundamentally genuine, was also in part a deliberately cultivated element in his poetic stock-in-trade. The implied insincerity must be recognized as a chief weakness in his character and work. Yet, all deductions made, we are most impressed by the tremendous force of his personality.

Views.—Byron's political opinions reveal one of the many radical inconsistencies of his nature. An aristocrat by birth, he was proud of his caste and tenacious of its prerogatives. At the same time he was a revolutionist to his finger-tips: "I have simplified my politics into a detestation of all existing governments." For the spent forces of feudalism—for George III. and the restored Bourbons—he had nothing but contempt. If not of the people he was for the people. Freedom always inspired him, and his lifelong sympathy with nations struggling for their liberty was sealed by his death.

Byron's views of poetry are similarly paradoxical. Perhaps because it was natural to him to be in the opposition, he proclaimed himself an adherent of Classicism against the growing Romanticism of his time. Chaucer he thought contemptible; Spenser he despised; for Wordsworth, even when he did not ridicule him, he had at most only a word of grudging praise; of Pope he spoke with extravagant laudation. Yet the whole influence of his example was fatally against his theories, for no one did more than he to popularize the romantic taste in poetry. This fact he recognized and deplored. He compared 18th-century poetry with the Parthenon, and 19th-century poetry with a Turkish mosque, and boasted that though he had helped his contemporaries to build the mosque he had never joined them in defacing the Parthenon.

Poems.—*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.* The first two cantos of this travel-poem are relatively immature; the last two are as fine as anything Byron ever wrote. Harold is but an *eidolon* of the poet in the first part; in the second he practically disappears. The method is that of description blended with meditation, usually of a melancholy and misanthropic character.

TALES.—These exhibit great sameness in plot, characters, and sentiments; they are all stories of turbulent passion, melodramatic and often tawdry, but with purple patches of description and reflection. In *The Giaour*, which will serve as an example, Hassan discovers that his mistress, the slave girl Leila, is in love with a young Venetian, known as the Giaour, or Infidel. He avenges his honour by drowning her; the Giaour kills him, and then enters a monastery.

DRAMAS.—Those written as regular stage-plays are in varying degrees failures, for Byron lacked the sense of the stage; the most interesting is *Sardanapalus*, the central character of which is obviously autobiographical. On the other hand, the dramatic poems, *Manfred* and *Cain*, rank among his most notable productions. *Manfred* is a powerful, though monotonous, study of remorse, suffering, and unconquerable pride. *Cain*, Byron's most thoughtful and serious work, is a daring justification of man's revolt against the "ways of God" as interpreted in the current theology.

SATIRES.—*The Vision of Judgment* is probably the most brilliant verse satire in the language; a scathing reply to Southey's poem of the same name, with its absurdly fulsome flattery of George III. *Beppo* was Byron's first experiment in the field afterwards so successfully worked in *Don Juan*—social satire. In *Don Juan* we have "the quintessence of Byronism"; an amazing medley of narrative, wit, satire, philosophy, pathos, cynicism, and ribaldry.

Characteristics.—Byron is our one great poetic interpreter of the mood of disillusion, cynicism, and unrest which, all over Europe, accompanied the reaction against the Revolution. The dominant note of his poetry is revolt. A thoroughgoing iconoclast, he sets himself to destroy, and if he has no reverence for the past, neither has he any faith or hope for the future. In his unqualified individualism he takes up an attitude of hostility towards society. Like his typical heroes, who are but gigantic shadows of himself, he is a strong man at war with the existing order. He loves freedom passionately, but freedom for him means at bottom the right of each to live as a law unto himself. Nor is he a rebel only against social conditions. Society is rotten; but the whole universe too is out of joint; and, as in respect of society he has no constructive gospel, so his more general philosophy of life leaves us face to face with negations. In his poetry of nature he expresses his characteristic spirit. He loves mountains and storms, and glories in the sea because of its utter indifference to man. On the formal side his work is weak. His facility was astonishing; but his taste was poor, and he lacked entirely the "art to blot." Much of his writing is slovenly, and even his finest passages are often marred by bad rhymes, imperfect grammar, or sudden lapses into the commonplace. His great virtue is his amazing vitality and force.

Byron's influence was enormous. At home he was for a time incomparably the most popular of poets, and the literature of his generation was steeped in his spirit. He was also a chief force in Continental romanticism. But with a change in the temper of English society, about the opening of the Victorian era, he quickly lost his vogue, and in the reaction which followed even his extraordinary merits were forgotten. We can see him now as one of the most astonishing personalities of his age; and if much of the poetry with which he entranced his contemporaries seems to us mere "gong and cymbal's din," what remains will suffice to ensure his immortality.

SHELLEY (1792–1822)

Life.—The son of a Whig squire, Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex, on August 4, 1792. At Eton he rose in revolt against the 'agging system, and by his eccentricities gained the name of "Mad Shelley." At Oxford he joined Thomas Jefferson Hogg in the production of a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*, for which he was expelled. In 1811 he married Harriet Westbrook, a schoolgirl whose troubles at home had stirred his ready sympathies. When he proved unfaithful, Harriet committed suicide. After her death he legitimized by marriage the relations already existing between him and Mary, the daughter of William Godwin (1816). In 1818 he left England for Italy, where the short remainder of his life was spent. He was drowned by the capsizing of his boat on the Bay of Spezzia, July 8, 1822.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.
(From the painting by Amelia Curran.)

Works.—Shelley's principal writings are:

VERSE.—*Queen Mab* (1813); *Alastor, and Other Poems* (1816); *The Revolt of Islam* (1818); *Rosalind and Helen* (1819); *The Cenci* (1819); *Prometheus Unbound* (1820); *Epipsychidion* (1821); *Adonais* (1821); *Hellas* (1822); *Posthumous Poems* (1824).

PROSE.—*Zastrozzi* (1810); *St. Irvyne* (1811); *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811); *Declaration of Rights* (a broadsheet, 1812); *A Refutation of Deism* (1814); *A Defence of Poetry* (1821: published 1824).

Character.—Shelley was a good man of business but always very much of a child, visionary yet practical, with high ideals but little sense of moral responsibilities. He was guilty of conduct which we are bound to condemn; but despite errors of judgment and action, his was a pure and unselfish spirit. The keynote of his character was "enthusiasm for humanity"; he had, as he confessed, a passion for

reforming the world ; and, if his impatience with all the evils that are done under the sun led him in early years into the wildest extravagances, it must be remembered that his character was ripening at the time of his premature death.

Views.—Alone among the English poets of his age, Shelley retained his faith in the Revolution. He believed that the world was already beginning to recover from " the revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France." For a time the spirit of disenchantment and the forces of reaction had had full sway :

> Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live. . . . This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows.—*Preface to " The Revolt of Islam."*

But the dawn of a new day was at hand :

> Mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change.—*Ibid.*

Poetry he regarded as a moral agent of the greatest importance and power. It achieves its high purposes by its irresistible appeal to the imagination, and, through that, to the sympathies :

> The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our nature and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively ; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others ; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination ; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause.—*A Defence of Poetry.*

The function of the poet is, therefore, to dilate the imagination and arouse the sympathies. But this function must not be confused with the direct inculcation of specific doctrines :

> It is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence. . . . My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence ; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life.—*Preface to " Prometheus Unbound."*

Poems.—With few exceptions Shelley's poems fall into two classes—the personal and the humanitarian.

PERSONAL POETRY.—To this class belong most of Shelley's wonderful lyrics—the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Lines written among the Euganean Hills, Stanzas in Dejection, The Skylark, The Cloud, Ode to the West Wind.* His longer personal poems include : *Alastor,* descriptive of the unsatisfied yearnings and death of a solitary poet ; largely autobiographical, yet containing Shelley's rebuke to those

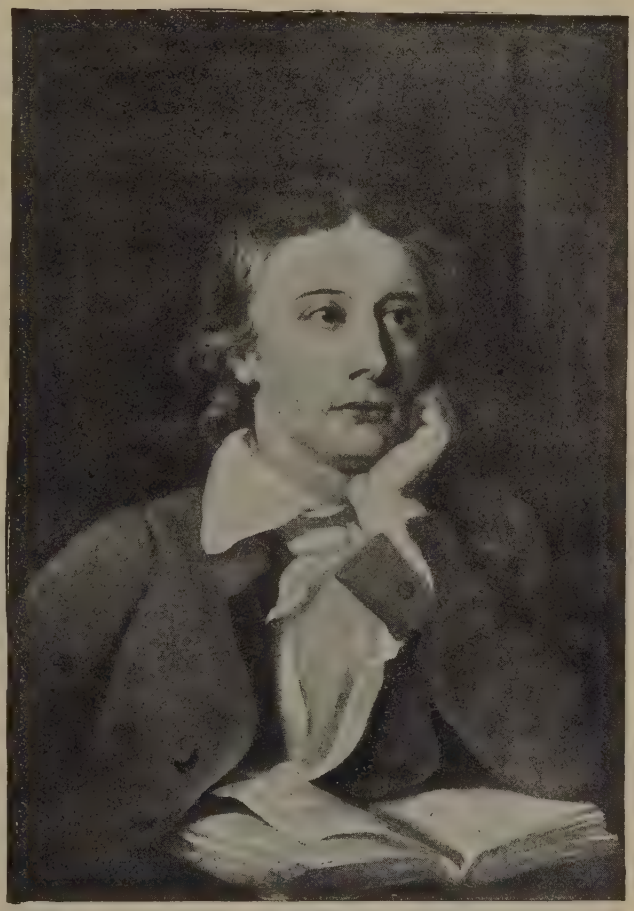
"who attempt to live without human sympathy"; *Julian and Maddalo*, a poem in the familiar style, in which Julian stands for the writer himself, and Maddalo for Byron; *Epipsychidion*, a poem of supreme beauty of diction and versification, addressed to an Italian girl, Emilia Viviani, whom for the moment he had idealized into a symbol of perfection.

HUMANITARIAN POETRY.—*Queen Mab*, a violent and immature expression of revolutionary faith, has some passages of fine feeling and imagination. It preaches the destruction of Christianity and all institutions, including property and marriage. Its philosophy is derived from Godwin's *Political Justice*. Its irregular blank verse is founded on Southey's *Thalaba*. *The Revolt of Islam*, a long, rambling, narrative poem, was written to express the poet's unwavering faith in revolutionary principles, and his hope for the salvation of mankind. In it "love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world" (Preface). Its hero and heroine are types of unselfish devotion to the ideal, and become martyrs for the cause of man. In *Prometheus Unbound*, a magnificent choral drama of the regeneration of humanity, Prometheus symbolizes man; Jupiter is the personification of oppression; his overthrow by Hercules is the destruction of despotism by strength; the marriage of Prometheus with Asia is the union of the mind of man with the spirit of love which pervades the universe, and with this union the reign of perfect love on earth begins. *Hellas* is another lyrical drama inspired by the Greek war of independence. To these may be added *The Masque of Anarchy*, *England in 1819*, and *Song to the Men of England*, in which Shelley appeals directly to the English people, and strikes the popular note.

OTHER POEMS.—*The Cenci*, a tragedy dealing with a subject too monstrous for the modern stage, contains passages of dramatic power to rival which we have to go back to the greater Elizabethans. *Adonais: an Elegy on the Death of Keats*, one of the finest of English elegies, is noteworthy among other things for its passionate expression of Shelley's pantheistic faith. *The Witch of Atlas*, a fantasy of great poetic beauty, describes creative imagination and its influence among men.

Characteristics.—As a lyric poet Shelley is among the very greatest. His song is pure inspiration, a thing all lightness, melody, and grace. With such work formal criticism has little concern: to analyse is futile, to praise is superfluous. As a poet of man he dwells habitually in a sphere far removed from that of ordinary passions and motives, and in a rarefied atmosphere which it is sometimes difficult to breathe; his verse overflows with his splendid enthusiasm for humanity, but his individual creations are but shadows in a shadow world. None the less he always makes love—love for the individual as well as for the race—the one great agency in the regeneration of mankind. The contrast at this point between Shelley and Byron is eminently suggestive: Byron's heroes are haughty misanthropes, who live entirely for themselves; Shelley's are noble, unselfish enthusiasts who, like Laon and Prometheus, willingly sacrifice themselves for the sake of man. Shelley's

poetry of nature lacks the intimate familiarity with earth's common things which we find in Wordsworth and Keats ; but it is specially great in the treatment of large landscapes. For him as for Wordsworth Nature is the incarnation of the divine. His atheism was, in fact, only the denial of the mechanical deity of the current theology: " the hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken " (Note to *Queen Mab*). In his earlier years Shelley put no check upon his opulent imagination, and his work is often overburdened with and made obscure by the profusion of his thick-coming fancies. The increasing restraint of his later writings attests his steady progress in his art.



John Keats.

KEATS (1795–1821)

Life.—John Keats was born on October 31, 1795, at Moorfields, where his father kept a livery stable. After six years at a private school he entered upon the study of medicine, and in 1816 received a small appointment at Guy's. But his bent towards literature was already pronounced, and it was strengthened by the friendship which he now formed with Leigh Hunt. An unfortunate passion for a young lady named Fanny Brawne, whom he first met in 1818, helped by its intensity to undermine his health, already broken. Consumption declared itself in February 1820 ; he was ordered to a warmer climate ; left for Italy in September 1820, and died in Rome, February 23, 1821.

Works.—*Poems* (1817) ; *Endymion* (1818) ; *Hyperion and Other Poems* (1820).

Character.—The traditional view of Keats as a sensual weakling who was killed by critical abuse of *Endymion* must be completely discarded. The real Keats was not in the least decadent; he had, on the contrary, plenty of courage, self-reliance, and pugnacity; and he was certainly not the man to let himself, in Byron's phrase, "be snuff'd out by an article." His letters to Fanny Brawne, with their hectic flush of passion, may indeed to some extent be held to justify the legendary conception of him; but these were written at a time of much anxiety and fast-failing health; and other letters of the same period to his brother in America and to various friends meanwhile show how much real grit went to the making of his character.

Views.—Poetry, Keats held, should be the incarnation of beauty, not the vehicle of philosophy, religious or social. Everything savouring of didacticism he abhorred: "We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive." The poet's true function is not that of teacher or prophet. He is creator and artist.

> With a great poet the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.—*Letter to his brother.*

He even reproves Shelley for sacrificing the true ends of poetry to the supposed interests of reform.

> You will, I am sure, forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore.—*Letter to Shelley.*

To the expression of beauty his own brief life was dedicated. "I have," he declared towards the end, "loved the principle of beauty in all things." The keynote of his work is struck in the famous opening line of *Endymion:*

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

He had, however, characteristic views on society and life. Socially he was a liberal of the school of Leigh Hunt; his religious philosophy is indicated in a letter:

> There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions, but they are not souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. . . . How, then, are these sparks, which are God, to have identity given them, so as to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this?

Poems.—The *Poems* of 1817, experimental and immature, are still in many ways significant. The longest, *Sleep and Poetry*, is noteworthy for its spirited attack upon the conventions of 18th-century verse. *I Stood Tiptoe* is full of the writer's simple delight in Nature. The dedicatory sonnet to Leigh Hunt—"Glory and loveliness have pass'd away"—shows Keats in a characteristic mood of lament over the disappearance of the beautiful old world of legend and romance.

Endymion is a long narrative poem founded upon the Greek myth of the love

of the shepherd prince Endymion for the moon-goddess Selene. It is rambling and confused, broken by episodes, and in its descriptive passages overloaded with detail In style it is diffuse and florid. In its loose romantic couplets Keats followed the lead of Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini*. But he carried freedom to excess, and his verse is at times almost formless. He himself afterwards spoke of the "slipshod" *Endymion*. It contains, however, many passages of great poetical beauty, and it is based, as Mr. Bridges has clearly shown, upon a remarkable view of love and life which is the key to the plot of the story, otherwise fantastic and unintelligible. Endymion is Man, the poet; the Moon is Poetry, "the principle of Beauty in all things;" and Cynthia, the Moon-Goddess, is the ideal beauty or love of woman. She proves to be the same person as the Indian lady, who represents sensuous passion; it follows, therefore, that for Keats the love of woman is in its essence, on both sides, the same as the love of beauty. And Man, seeing ideal beauty in his desire, mingles with it his longing for excellence, fame, and immortality.

Isabella is a tale from the *Decameron* (IV. 5), in the Italian eight-line stanza.

The Eve of St. Agnes is a romantic story using for machinery the mediæval superstition that by the performance of certain rites a girl might, on St. Agnes's Eve, obtain a vision of her future husband. The poem, however, is less a story than a series of gorgeous pictures, outdoing in splendour even the work of Spenser, in whose stanza it is written.

Of *Hyperion*, a fragment dealing with the overthrow of the Saturnian dynasty, there are two drafts. The first is in a majestic blank verse which testifies to a careful study of Milton. The revision was due to a revulsion of feeling in which Keats, now under the influence of Dante, was determined to get rid of the Miltonic imitation and achieve a simpler and purer English style. The poem is of great value, because it is "the most mature attempt he ever made to express some of his own convictions concerning human life." It is a *vision* or allegory, not of love but of knowledge, and moreover shows, by objective images, how man attains "sovereignty" by conduct, and insight by actual contact and sympathy with human misery. From this standpoint the purely artistic life is seen to be selfish, and inferior to the life of action.

Lamia, the story of a young man of Corinth who married a serpent-woman, is, within its limits, one of the most perfect of Keats's longer works. The use of the rhymed metre shows an advance over *Endymion*. The passage beginning "Do not all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy?" is a striking expression of his hatred of the scientific spirit.

MINOR POEMS.—Among these special note must be taken of *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and the three great odes, *To a Nightingale*, *On a Grecian Urn*, and *To Melancholy*. The first-named is a little masterpiece of direct and simple narrative laden with ineffable suggestion. The odes, apart from their intrinsic beauty, are particularly important as revelations of the tender pensive melancholy which forms a characteristic part of Keats's view of life.

Characteristics.—In Keats's poetry we are far away from the turmoil of contemporary life. He is neither an iconoclast like Byron nor a utopian like Shelley, and he has no "message" for his age, whether of rebellion or of hope. Indifferent to the questions which were shaking the minds of men about him, he turns from the prosaic present to seek his own "particular bliss" in Greek myth and mediæval romance, and he handles his materials from the past in the spirit of the pure artist, without twisting them to argumentative purposes even when he secretly charges them with latter-day meanings. The same objectivity is apparent in his treatment of Nature. He revelled in natural beauty for its own sake. It is not, perhaps, that there is nothing Wordsworthian—nothing religious or mystical—about his feeling, but his expression of it is always an image, never an exposition. It is simple, sensuous, direct. Historically, a point of great importance about his poetry is that it was fed by two streams of influence, the classic and the romantic. His classic poems, which in their entirely fresh treatment of mythology are in marked contrast with 18th-century conventionalism, show "a natural affinity with the Greek mind" (Jebb), the more surprising on account of his own absolute ignorance of the Greek tongue. Greek in temper, he is, however, the reverse of Greek in style. His formal masters are in the main the Elizabethans, and even Homer he knew only through Chapman's version. His romantic poems connect themselves directly with the mediæval revival.

Keats's poetry naturally leaves us with a pathetic sense of incompleteness. To speculate upon the unrealized possibilities of his genius would indeed be waste of time. But when we note the immense development shown in the few years of his activity, and further remember that, as his letters prove, his mind was ripening rapidly at the end, we cannot but recognize the greatness of the loss which literature sustained in his untimely death. "If one English poet might be recalled to-day from the dead to continue the work which he left unfinished on earth, it is probable that the crown of his country's desire would be set on the head of John Keats" (R. Bridges). Even as it is, through his direct influence on Tennyson, Swinburne, Rossetti, and Morris, he has left a deep mark on later English poetry.

SOUTHEY (1774–1843)

Life and Character.—Robert Southey was born at Bristol, August 12, 1774; was expelled from Westminster for writing an article against school-flogging; entered Oxford with his head full of Rousseau and the Revolution; joined Coleridge in the scheme of Pantisocracy; and on the collapse of this paid a long visit to Spain and Portugal, where he laid the foundation of his knowledge of the literature and history of the Peninsula. He married Edith Fricker in 1797, and, making literature his profession, settled down to a life of unremitting industry. His home from 1803 was at Greta Hall, Keswick. He became poet laureate in 1813, and in 1839 took as his second wife Caroline Bowles, herself a writer of verse. He died on March 21,

1843. Southey was a man of beautiful character, upright, tender, true-hearted, brave. His poetry may be neglected, but literary biography is the richer for the memory of his blameless and unselfish life.

Works.—Southey's principal works in verse are *Wat Tyler* (1794); *Poems* (1795, 1797, 1801); *Joan of Arc* (1796); *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801); *Madoc* (1805); *Metrical Tales* (1805); *The Curse of Kehama* (1810); *Roderick* (1814); *A Vision of Judgment* (1821); *A Tale of Paraguay* (1825). (For his prose writings, see p. 512.)

Views.—Like Wordsworth and Coleridge, Southey began as a Revolutionist and ended as a Tory; but even in his Tory days he remained a zealous social reformer.[1] There was nothing striking about his literary opinions. On the whole, he sympathized with Wordsworth's naturalism and Coleridge's romanticism; in the latter case, however, with qualifications. He was a strong supporter of simplicity against ornateness in style. Poetry, he held, should aim rather to elevate than to affect—a tenet in harmony with the ethical spirit of his own work.

Poems.—*Wat Tyler* (surreptitiously issued in 1817 by a piratical publisher into whose hands the forgotten manuscript of twenty-three years before had passed) and *Joan of Arc*, celebrating the glories of French patriotism when England was at war with the Republic, are full of Southey's early Radicalism. *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and *Madoc* are portions of his gigantic scheme (inspired by the reading at school of Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*) of turning the great mythologies of the world into heroic poems. They illustrate the tendency of Romanticism to go far afield in quest of fresh material; while the irregular rhymeless measure of *Thalaba* (adopted from Dr. Sayers of Norwich, and in turn imitated by Shelley in *Queen Mab*) is an extreme example of the breaking up of the formal regularity of 18th-century verse. Southey's minor poems include some admirable lyrics and a number of ballads which connect themselves with the romantic movement by their free use of the supernatural.

Characteristics.—Southey was a most industrious poet; and a careful and conscientious craftsman; his work has a fine spirit and a certain air of distinction; his narrative poems are far more interesting than is commonly supposed. But in inspiration and the higher qualities of poetry he is conspicuously wanting. Except for a few minor poems, little of his enormous output is now really alive.

LANDOR (1775–1864)

Life and Character.—Walter Savage Landor was born at Warwick, January 30, 1775, and was educated at Rugby and Oxford. On his father's death in 1801 he inherited a handsome property and established himself at Bath, and later at Llanthony Abbey, Monmouthshire. His marriage in 1811 with the daughter of a Swiss

[1] See *Sir Thomas More*

banker proved unfortunate. For a number of years he lived in Italy; in 1835, after a serious quarrel with his wife, he settled again at Bath; in 1859 he returned to Florence, where he died, September 17, 1864. Landor was a man of proud and impulsive nature, subject to great bursts of passion; obstinate, self-willed, and in everyday affairs hopelessly irrational. His innumerable quarrels, small and great, fill a considerable space in the story of his life. But he was generous, high-minded, and chivalrous. The essential nobility of his character is attested by the fact that he gained the affection and esteem of such men as Southey, the Hares, Carlyle, Forster, Dickens, and Browning.

Works.—His most important works in verse are *Miscellaneous Poems* (1795, 1800, 1802, 1831); *Gebir* (1798); *Simonides* (1806); *Count Julian* (1812); *Hellenics* (1847); *Italics* (1848). (For his prose writings, see p. 470.)

Walter Savage Landor.
(S. Kensington Museum.)

Views.—From the religious standpoint Landor is commonly called a pagan. It is more correct to say that his attitude towards the ultimate mystery of things is what we should now describe as Positivist. At Oxford he was nicknamed "the mad Jacobin"; and though he early came to include hatred of France among the most violent of his prejudices, he never wavered in his republicanism. Yet he was not a democrat in the modern sense of the term. He was, on the contrary, essentially a patrician, with no sympathy with the "vulgar" and no fondness for the "mob." His political temper was that of Greece and Rome, and he even defended tyrannicide on the authority of "the valiant and the wise of old."[1] His poetic taste was also severely fashioned on the antique, while among the moderns he admired most those who themselves had followed most closely in the steps of the classics, like Milton and Alfieri. He held that all great poetry must be substantial in subject.

> A pretty sonnet may be written on a lambkin or a parsnip . . . but a great poet must clasp the higher passions breast-high, and compel them in an authoritative tone to answer his interrogatories.—*Pentameron*, II.
>
> We may write little things well . . . but never will any be justly called a great poet unless he has treated a great subject worthily.—*Ibid.*, IV.

[1] *Letter to Emerson.*

Yet he was very deeply concerned about the technique of poetry. His lifelong devotion to classic studies and his practice of writing in Latin, the modern use of which he defended, and which he employed as a second mother-tongue, profoundly affected his style, and largely account for its reserve and excessive concentration.

Poems.—*Gebir* is based on the legendary story of one Gebir, Moorish invader of Spain, whose name survives in Gibraltar. The plot is confused, the style so condensed, and the transitions so abrupt, that it is difficult to grasp the poem as a whole. Separate passages, however, are unrivalled since Milton for loftiness of thought and majesty of diction. Incidentally, the narrative bears a message of rebuke to tyrannous ambition.

Count Julian, the first and best-known example of Landor's work in the poetic drama, was written at a time when he was ambitious of "treading down at heel the shoes of Alfieri."[1] His interest in the patriotic struggle in Spain led him to turn again to the legendary history of that country for his material. The play has great power in places, but it is weak in construction, and the characters are so idealized as to be scarcely human.

MINOR POEMS.—Among these are several narrative poems, like *Chrysaor* and *The Hamadryad*, which deserve the highest praise; and some lyrics, like the famous lines on Rose Aylmer, of exquisite beauty of feeling and workmanship.

Characteristics.—Landor was a classic writing in a romantic age; but his classicism, born of instinctive sympathy and nourished by scholarship, has nothing in common with what went under that name in the 18th century. He is classic in particular by reason of his reserve and the statuesque quality of his work. His blank verse is severe, massive, stately, but monotonous. His lyrics and epigrams are often perfect in expression. But his habit of over-concentration and his use at times of syntactical forms which are Latin rather than English render him often obscure.

There are those who seek popularity without finding it, and those who find it without seeking it. Landor belonged to neither class, for he neither sought nor found. He is emphatically the poet of the cultured few. He founded no school, and his influence over other poets was very slight.

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[1] *Letter to Southey.*

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Chapter 3. THE NOVELISTS

Maria Edgeworth: her Stories for Children, Irish Stories, Novels of Fashionable Life—Jane Austen's Novels—Sir Walter Scott—Other Novelists: Galt, Miss Ferrier, Peacock, Captain Marryat, etc.

It was not till the middle of the 19th century that novelists began that deeper reading of life which has made the novel of to-day a very different thing from the novel of Fielding, though no one has improved on the dramatic structure exemplified in *Tom Jones*. Jane Austen accepted his dramatic method and comic treatment, confining herself, however, to an even narrower field than that cultivated by the authoress of *Evelina*. But her refined artistic sense made her suppress herself so completely, that after her first attempts she achieved that highest form of intellectual realism in which the meaning is unfolded in the story itself, as it is revealed unconsciously by the characters in Shakespearean comedy. Scott likewise adopted in a modified form Fielding's dramatic scheme, though not his intellectual interpretation. Scott simply enjoyed life. He painted characters for the sake of their picturesqueness, their humours, their rich idiosyncrasy, without criticizing life or propounding any theories; but with an all-embracing sympathy and understanding that widened the scope of the novel, and made him a greater force in the development of fiction than any other writer.

MARIA EDGEWORTH (1767–1849)

Miss Edgeworth's first stories might have been grouped with the didactic fiction considered in an earlier chapter. She collaborated with her erudite father in his *Practical Education* (1798), and at a precocious age began a translation of Madame de Genlis's letters on education. The edifying stories in *The Parent's Assistant* (1796) skilfully adapted her father's maxims to the understanding of children, and emanate from the same school of thought as Day's *Sandford and Merton*. But they are richer in human interest than any other productions of this school. "Simple Susan" and "Lazy Lawrence" still rank as children's classics, and her *Popular Tales* (1803), uniformly designed as they are to inculcate homely precepts, have a genuine charm in their picturing of the quiet, uneventful lives of a rustic world. Miss Edgeworth was a pioneer of the short story in English, as she was also of local colour and racial idiosyncrasy and dialect in her Irish novels.

"Castle Rackrent."—Her first longer story, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), was a work of higher reach. It is not her most characteristic story, but it is the one that has

had most influence on later novelists. Here she first showed the compelling interest of local colour; it is, in fact, the prototype of the innumerable stories in which novelists have now pegged out claims on every few hundred square miles of British territory. Sketching with truth and humour the characters of a family of spendthrift baronets, she gave the inner history of their deterioration and ruin, and the whole tragi-comedy of Irish improvidence. It was the real not the stage Irishman that she drew. Thady Quirk is a lifelike study of low life, done with affectionate insight. Sir Patrick, Sir Murtagh, and Sir Condy are singular personalities, such as could have been produced nowhere but in Ireland: drawn with all their tricks of habit and mind and speech, in the words of a faithful and admiring servitor, himself their equal as a character.

Other Irish Novels.—Several novels dealing with manners and morals in English society intervened before she returned to Irish scenes in two full-length novels, *The Absentee* (1801–9) and *Ormond* (1817). These combined the dramatic plot of the ordinary novel of manners with the same rich comedy of national characteristics. Lord Clombrony, though he loves his native country, is an absentee for the sake of his vulgar wife, who hankers after fashionable life in London. On the one side we are shown society life with its hollowness, fops, empty-headed soldiers, fortune-hunters of both sexes, and the heterogeneous slaves of fashion; and, on the other, the wretched tenants ground down by dishonest agents, while the estate goes to ruin. The book is saved from being only a moral and sarcastic picture of a vicious state of things by lighter ingredients—the kindly Irish humours of Larry the postilion, the witty and good-natured parasite Sir Terence O'Fay, and that fine Irish gentleman Count O'Halloran. From the same source came the humorous dialogue and happy drollery of *Ormond*, begun as an Irish *Tom Jones*, and continued as an Irish *Sir Charles Grandison;* it contains far too much moralizing, but also contains those pleasing oddities, King Corny (another Sir Condy) and the Voltairian Sir Ulick O'Shane. The success and influence of these Irish novels may be estimated from their effect upon Sir Walter Scott. He declares, in his general preface to the Waverley Novels (1829), that it was "the extended and well-merited fame of Miss Edgeworth" which aroused his emulation in 1811, and induced him to take up again his long-abandoned manuscript, in the hope of doing for his own country something of the same kind as that which she had so fortunately achieved for Ireland.

"Belinda."—*Belinda* (1801) was the first of Miss Edgeworth's regular novels of fashionable life. It is a complete example of her didactic method. Intellectually a general statement of her views on woman's sphere and duties, it develops a series of characters arranged in sharp contrast, and points out the results—Belinda, the ideal of maidenhood and womanly good sense, the fast society woman who chaperons her, the profligate and fatuous beaux, the admirable wife and mother, the ridiculous

champion of woman's rights, and the girl brought up like a hothouse flower who goes to the bad. Her own rôle as novelist is less that of the satirist than of the moral instructor.

"Tales of Fashionable Life."—As in the tales for children, so in her *Tales of Fashionable Life*, each story is the illustration of a clear-cut precept. The obscure element is eliminated from human character. All is in clear definition. To each person is allotted a definite portion of goodness and badness, wisdom and weakness, and the resultant of this parallelogram of forces is then produced. Miss Edgeworth's novels remind one of those austere pictures by Dutch and Italian masters in which the panorama is exhibited with the clearness of a mathematical diagram. Her very titles—*Ennui*, *Patronage*, *Manœuvring*, *The Absentee*—indicate from the outset the way things will go. She was a novelist of great innate gifts; she had a fine sense of humour, and a quick and retentive eye for character; but she was cramped and confined by the rigid theoretic framework prescribed by her pedagogic mission.

Jane Austen.

JANE AUSTEN (1775–1817)

Life and Works.—Jane Austen was the younger daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, rector of Steventon, where she lived, with periodical visits to Bath, for the first quarter of a century of her life, receiving a good general education in her home. She began to write stories early, some traces of her juvenile burlesques of silly romances being discernible in *Northanger Abbey*. A novel in letters modelled on Richardson, entitled *Elinor and Marianne*, was afterwards recast and rewritten as *Sense and Sensibility*; and another story, *Lady Susan*, has in later days been printed. *Pride and Prejudice*, which shows her at the height of her powers, was written in 1796–7, and in 1798 she wrote *Northanger Abbey*.

The family removed to Bath in 1801, and from the completion of the last-mentioned story till she went to live at Chawton, near Winchester, in 1809, there was a complete cessation of her literary activity. *Sense and Sensibility* was published at last in 1811, the year she began *Mansfield Park*; and by 1816 she had

completed *Emma* and *Persuasion*. *Pride and Prejudice* appeared in 1813, *Mansfield Park* next year, *Emma* in 1816, all these being published anonymously. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (1818) were the only novels that were published under her own name. *Persuasion* was written in failing health, and in 1817 she took up her residence in Winchester, where she died.

Characteristics.—The world in which Jane Austen garnered her experience was a limited one, the segment of society coming within the purview of a country parsonage, an occasional sojourn in the city of Bath (which had not quite ceased to be the fashionable watering-place of Beau Nash's reign), and rarer visits to London. But if as a novelist of manners she kept within rigid boundaries, as a novelist of character she ranged widely; for every little world is a world of character, and superficial differences of manner and breeding are as nothing to the fundamental likenesses and contrasts of human nature. Not that she, any more than the other realists from Fielding to Thackeray, ever penetrates below the prose world of comedy. Jane Austen's humour has been compared to Shakespeare's; but of his poetry she has no trace, and there are but faint glimpses of the deeper pathos and tragedy of life.

Her Artistic Scheme.—Like Fielding, she ordered her story on definite intellectual lines. But she did not, like Fielding, make a display of her philosophy of life. This is as clear and definite as Fielding's, but she expounded it in purely artistic terms. Her rendering of life is her philosophy of life. She stood entirely aloof from the stage, and made no comments on the action or the characters; yet her transparent comedy leaves us in no doubt of her meaning. The plot may be a pithy illustration of some deep antithesis of character, clinched by the title, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Persuasion*—a demonstration of the supreme value of prudence, modesty, or self-control. But Jane Austen's art was too refined to convey the best of her meaning in so ostentatious a way. It pleased her better to make us peep unawares below the surface, and to flatter readers by making them perceive hints and implications which she seemed to withhold. From the moral theorem as a starting-point, she proceeds to a more catholic and a more subtle scrutiny of life, under the guidance of "the Comic Spirit."

"Sense and Sensibility" (1811).—The first of her novels to be published was, in its first form, *Elinor and Marianne*, written in letters, somewhere about 1792. In its revised form it keeps traces of her early impatience of sentimentality. A symmetrical contrast is presented: Elinor is common-sense and self-control; her sister Marianne—a quiet hit at the school of sensibility—luxuriates in romantic emotion. These contrary dispositions determine the tenor of their lives. As would be expected, the lady who behaves in a rational manner has little to complain about in fortune, while the foolish virgin meets with nothing but trouble. Miss

Austen prepares the unexpected in the reformation of Marianne. The most cherished article of this young lady's creed was that marriages are made in heaven, and neither man nor woman can fall in love twice. But after being jilted by a worthless lover, she marries, sensibly and unromantically, a staid, middle-aged gentleman, who like her has gone through the chastening experience of a prior attachment. The humours of John Dashwood and his wife, the parents of the contrasted couple, give a foretaste of Miss Austen's rich domestic comedy.

"Pride and Prejudice" (1813).—Before completing *Sense and Sensibility*, Miss Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* in 1796–7, entitling it originally *First Impressions*. This is her accepted masterpiece. It tells how a young lady, whose thoughtful and demurely critical disposition reflects her creator's, is affronted by the hauteur of a patronizing gentleman, who subsequently falls in love with her. Incidents occur which deepen her prejudice and intensify his pride. He proposes, but rides the high horse so stubbornly that a fall is inevitable. With her refusal of a condescending offer of his hand begins the delicate process of disillusionment and revelation of true character, by which the clouds of misunderstanding are eventually dispelled. Darcy's superciliousness is humbled, and the lovers are gradually led to mutual knowledge, respect, and affection. The clever, unbalanced, sarcastic father Mr. Bennet and his silly wife, the absurd clerical toady Mr. Collins, and the magnificent snob Lady Catherine de Bourgh, with a large number of lesser personages, furnish out the story with delicious comedy.

"Mansfield Park" and "Emma."—*Mansfield Park* (1814) elaborates the same kind of comparisons and contrasts, in the complete history of the different marriage unions of three sisters. All three are selfish in different ways, and their families make an interesting series of nicely differentiated characters. Like Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Fanny Price is one of those sensible and estimable girls on whom Miss Austen thought it worth while to lavish immense pains. Emma also was one of her favourites—a pretty, wilful young lady whose rage for match-making and aptitude for mistakes get herself and her friends into endless scrapes, for which she has to suffer. Full of faults, she is made lovable by the sterling qualities forming the basis of her nature. These two novels make a very comprehensive and mature study of the domestic and social scenes in which Miss Austen found inexhaustible comedy. The comedy is tempered by some pathos, and is never without a serious side, showing the ordinary, trivial-seeming incidents of daily life in their true importance. All is plain, unexaggerated realism, with neither high lights nor deep shadows. It is not their singularity that makes the characters memorable, but the art with which we are brought to know them as intimate acquaintances, in the sober, grey light of her quiet portraiture. The spirit of her criticism of life is the spirit of pure comedy. She was far too impersonal and serene for satire. Satire denounces, comedy interprets, and her laugh is genial and

indulgent. She handles the loquacious, muddle-headed Miss Bates, and all the amiable egotists, harmless fools, conceited flirts, and sentimental maidens with the finest *bonhomie ;* her humour never touches the verge of caricature.

"Northanger Abbey."—Miss Austen began *Northanger Abbey* in 1798 as a satire on the Radcliffian school of romancers, or at any rate worked into it fragments of such earlier satire. It was accepted by a bookseller at Bath for the sum of £10, left in a drawer, and not published till 1818, after her brother had bought back the manuscript. A young girl, whose mind has been fed on the groans and tears of *Udolpho* and *The Italian,* goes to stay at an abbey newly built in the admired fashion of the Gothic revival ; and her distempered imagination, on a stormy night when doors and windows are rattling in their frames, conjures up all the luxurious thrills of a vigil in some haunted mediæval castle. What is more serious, she fancies that her host is a monster stained with crime, and has to pass through a humiliating process of enlightenment before she learns to correct her judgments. From satire the author turns presently to the more congenial task of narrating, with delicate and never-failing humour, the history of this naïve and charming girl's entry into life, and the passing away of her illusions.

"Persuasion."—*Persuasion,* published with *Northanger Abbey,* and, like it, a very brief novel, is a tender, wistful tale, more of a love story pure and simple than was Miss Austen's wont, with a vein of subdued pathos, though the issue is happy. Anne Eliot parts from her lover ; but after years of absence he returns, misinterpretations are cleared up, and old love reasserts its sway. The characters are limned in still finer shades than in the other novels ; in this sense it is the most delicate and refined of all her masterpieces in this miniature style of art. Nor is it lacking in comedy, but the humour is gentle and restrained as ever. It differs, however, from the rest of the novels in one point of surpassing interest. The climax of the story is the scene in which the reconciliation is brought about irresistibly in a room full of people and without a word passing between the long estranged lovers. Captain Wentworth writing at a side table hears Anne talking of a friend's misfortunes to Captain Harville. "All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one : you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone." Harville is moved to admiration ; Wentworth to a deeper emotion. He hastily ends his letter and leaves the room ; returns when the rest have gone, lays it before Anne, and disappears again. "You pierce my soul. . . . Dare not to say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you." A few moments, and the lovers, walking the streets of Bath, "returned into the past, more exquisitely happy in their re-union than when it had been first projected" eight years before. In its delicate intensity this twenty-third chapter reaches the supreme perfection of high comedy, and reveals a power which is visible in no other of Miss Austen's works.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S NOVELS

When, as he stated, Scott felt that Byron's poems of passion and crime were ousting his own lays from popularity, he took from a drawer, where it had lain since 1805, and completed, the manuscript of *Waverley, or 'tis Sixty Years Since* (1814),

Sir Walter Scott and his Literary Friends at Abbotsford.
(From the painting by Thomas Faed, R.A.)

a romance of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Thenceforth to the year before his death in 1832 Scott busied himself in writing similar romances, twenty-six in all; besides two series of short stories, *Chronicles of the Canongate.*

The Waverley Novels.—They might be classified in two groups—those pitched in a remote period, and those laid in the hundred years preceding. The first nine were all Scottish stories. *Guy Mannering* (1815) and *The Antiquary* (1816), which immediately followed *Waverley*, were concerned with Scottish life in very recent

times. *The Black Dwarf* (1816), a slight work, and the fine romance *Rob Roy* (1817) dealt with the Jacobites before or about 1715. *Old Mortality* (1816) went back to the Covenanters and the battle of Bothwell Brig (1679). *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) came a little nearer Scott's own days, telling the story of the Porteous Riots (1736). *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) belongs to the last decade of the 17th century. *A Legend of Montrose* (1819) is a romance of Montrose and the Civil War in Scotland.

Ivanhoe (1819) broke new ground. It is a brilliant picture of mediæval England, and the differences of Norman and Saxon in the time of Cœur de Lion and Prince John. In *The Monastery* and its sequel *The Abbot* (1820), Scott returned to Scottish scenes in the time of Mary. *Kenilworth* (1821) pictured Elizabethan England; *The Pirate* (1821) travelled away to the Orkneys and Shetland; but *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) and *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) came back to the court of James I. of England and the Restoration era. *Quentin Durward* (1823) opened brilliantly a small group of Continental romances; it dealt with Louis XI. and Charles the Bold, and had a sort of sequel in *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), a tale of Charles the Bold and the Switzers. In *St. Ronan's Well* (1823) Scott made his nearest approach to his own day in a humorous portrait of society at a watering-place on the Tweed. *Redgauntlet* (1824), a novel specially rich in reminiscence of his own youth, had its scenes in Cumberland and the Scottish margin of the Solway. *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman* (1825) were tales of the Crusaders, one laid on the Welsh border, the other in Palestine. *Woodstock* (1826) was a narrative of Cromwell's time. *The Fair Maid of Perth* gave an animated picture of Scotland in 1402. *The Surgeon's Daughter*, a Scoto-Indian story (1827), and *Castle Dangerous*, a Douglas tale of the 14th century (1831), were romances of an inferior kind. *Count Robert of Paris* (1831) was a tale of Constantinople and the First Crusade.

Scott's Training and Antecedents.—By the coincidence of personal genius and the circumstances of his training with the intellectual current of the age, it was his lot to gather up the different threads of romanticism, combine them with Fielding's realism, and produce a type of fiction epitomizing the finer characteristics of both. A generation later, Thackeray rebelled against what he called Scott's romantic nonsense. But there was a substantial reality behind the romantic glamour; and the broader, kindlier realism of the elder writer did more than Thackeray's sarcastic diagnosis of society to inspire the English novel of the 19th century with vigorous life. Scott united the antiquarian zeal of the ordinary historical romancer and an immensely superior knowledge of history and antiquities. His imagination, his fertility and romantic stage-craft, could only be rivalled by a Dumas and a Victor Hugo combined. In collecting the *Border Minstrelsy*, Scott served his apprenticeship as a latter-day gleeman, and made those friendships with shepherds, yeomen, petty lairds, and gaberlunzies of the Lowlands which served him in good stead when he created the robust population of his novels. The metrical histories

inaugurated in 1805 with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* are the nearest modern reproduction of the mediæval romances of chivalry. His poems, though he failed to make them an adequate expression of his realism and his humour, exercised and refined Scott's imagination. His training was complete; he was a master of dramatic narrative, a magician in his powers of scene-painting, and a fertile delineator of character, when he sat down and finished *Waverley*. He had an even keener eye for the enthralling interest of reality than for the gramarye of romance. Thus his novels carried out on an ampler scale the twofold plan proposed by Wordsworth and Coleridge in the *Lyrical Ballads*:

> "To persons supernatural, or at least romantic . . . to transfer from our inward nature a human interest or a semblance of truth . . . ;" and, secondly, "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonder of the world before us."[1]

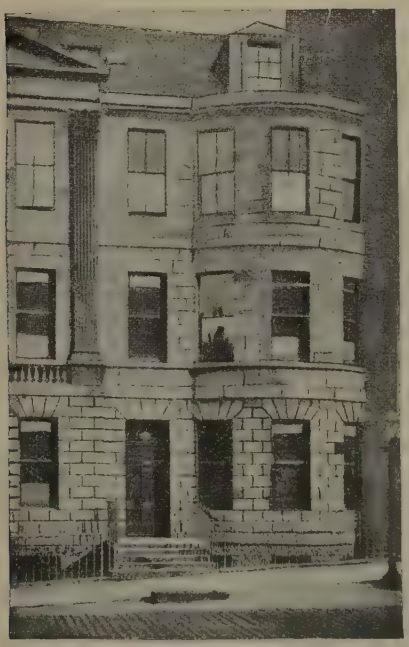
Scott's Romanticism.—Scott did not give up the familiar inventions of Gothic romance, but employed them, as a rule, with skill and discretion. Marvels were not in any way out of place in the poems. The goblin page in the *Lay*, the phantom tournament in *Marmion*, and the visionary emprise of the knight who wins the Arthurian lady in *The Bridal of Triermain*, are not discordant with the mediæval setting. In *Waverley*, also, the apparition of doom is in perfect keeping with Highland traditions of second-sight. Sometimes, like Mrs. Radcliffe, he laid bare the mechanism of his spirit-raising, for farcical purposes in *Woodstock*, for the sake of wild grotesquerie in *Wandering Willie's Tale*,[2] where, however, there is a lurid nether-world of fear and superstition left unanalysed. A clumsy inconsistency spoiled the effect of the White Lady of Avenel in *The Monastery*. But in general Scott wisely preferred the more moving, because more credible, effects of beings living on the verge of both worlds, and claiming kinship with the occult. Such are the embodiments of religious frenzy in *Old Mortality*, the gloomy, fanatical Covenanters, Balfour of Burley, Habakkuk Mucklewrath, and Mause Headrigg, and those strange creatures of witchcraft and superstition whom he invests with a twilight of mingled doubt and credulity. Meg Merrilies, in *Guy Mannering*, is a superb tragedy queen, and Norna of the Fitful Head, in *The Pirate*, all the more impressive in that her seeming supernatural knowledge is left unexplained. No finer examples could be cited of perfectly natural creations diffusing a sense of the mysterious and fateful than old Elspeth of the Craigburnfoot in *The Antiquary*, and the crazed Madge Wildfire, who sings the ballad of "Proud Maisie" in *The Heart of Midlothian*.

Its Defects.—On the other hand, Scott's theatrical propensities often give tinsel and melodrama instead of tragedy. The plot-business of *Kenilworth* is stagy stuff, though redeemed by the historical tableaux, which are not less brilliant because

[1] Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*.

[2] In *Redgauntlet*.

they condense decades into years. *The Talisman* is a mystery-novel, saved only by the virility and humour of the camp-life of the Crusaders, with Leopold of Austria, Montferrat, Richard the Lion-hearted, and his crusty henchman the lord of Gilsland, venting their incompatibility of temper. Romanticism shows its feeblest side in *Peveril of the Peak.* Leslie Stephen ridiculed the operatic falsity of Helen Macgregor's declamation against the Saxon invader in *Rob Roy.* Thackeray parodied *Ivanhoe* from the point of view of common-sense. One need only compare the *Legend of Montrose* with the documented realism of a modern novel, Neil Munro's *John Splendid,* the obverse picture of the Little Wars of Lorn, to see how Scott glozes over the barbarity of historical fact in order to dazzle us with the beauty and romance of the Highlands.



Scott's House in Castle Street, Edinburgh.

Scott's Realism.—Romanticism was the main source of Scott's influence. But his power of creating character and the drama of existence did even more to make his stories great. His reconstructions of the past have a solidity like the realism of Fielding. He worked upon the stuff of experience even in historical fiction, and when he came within sixty years of his own time gave an unsurpassed portrayal of the society he intimately knew. The standard of verisimilitude, the close representation of manners, and a great deal of the machinery of Fielding's realistic comedy, Scott adopted as a matter of course, though he deviated from its well-ordered dramatic procedure. His habits were too careless and hasty for strict elaboration of plot, and his preference was for epical narration culminating in strong dramatic scenes. Having small interest in moral or other problems, moved only by the stirring animation of the human spectacle, and expressing unconsciously his sane vision of realities as well as his sense of romance, he enlarged the sphere of the novel, and shows the broadening of sympathy with every phase of personality at this period of literary revival.

Scott saw the world as a splendid play, and he reproduced what he saw without going very deep into motives or analysing character. And as he looked at man, so he looked at nature. Ruskin pointed to Scott's recognition of the free and independent life of nature, and instanced him as one of the few moderns who never indulged in the so-called " pathetic fallacy." His descriptions of scenery

are quite different from the sentimental landscape-drawing of Mrs. Radcliffe. Hence, as Ruskin said, he " appears at first sight shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier." His characters have the same principle of life ; they seem to exist of and for themselves. They are not (except his heroes, who are lay-figures) invented to fit the plot, or to have any intellectual significance. Hasty critics have detected a shallowness in their construction, in that the springs of action and feeling are not revealed. Scott did not explore his own inner being in order to divine how other people would live and act. He understood life, not by conscious study and reflection, but intuitively. His men and women simply seem to have been born, not invented.

The Scottish Novels.—This is most obviously the case with his novels of Scottish life, especially those dated within half a century of his own youth, comprising *Guy Mannering, The Antiquary, Old Mortality, Rob Roy, The Heart of Midlothian, St. Ronan's Well,* and *Redgauntlet.* Of the vast crowd of Scots peasants, shepherds, farmers, beggars, smugglers, Glasgow burgesses, Edinburgh lawyers, soldiers, lairds, who throng the background, every one is a living individual. Contrast his artificial mediævalism with the genuine romance of Dandie Dinmont, the Border yeoman in *Guy Mannering.* This is a bit of sheer realism, clearly drawn straight from experience. Yet Dandie is also romance itself, a spirited incarnation of Border life, and an epitome of Border history. Scott did not deal in caricature. Take, for instance, one that might first strike one as bordering on the grotesque, the litigious fool Peter Peebles, in *Redgauntlet.* Though he cuts ridiculous capers, the man is entirely credible ; his pedantry and extravagance and his fixed ideas are a natural result of the interminable lawsuit which has unhinged his brain. Scott triumphed in limning an eccentric. Look at the Antiquary, Jonathan Oldbuck, whose foibles touched his own weaknesses ; or the pathetic Dominie Sampson, whose simplicity and heroism draw tears mingled with laughter. It is known that these have elements of two characters he knew in real life, one being a piece of himself. But how the complete characters developed was his own secret. Counsellor Pleydell, whose drolleries almost pass the border-line of farce, was drawn from the legal society of Scott's early days in Edinburgh. The old bedesman Edie Ochiltree, the canny gardener Andrew Fairservice, the Glasgow bailie Nicol Jarvie, David Deans, Willie Steenson, all strike one as originals he had met.

Unconscious Art. — Probably they emerged unbidden from his teeming brain. At any rate, the spontaneity with which his imagination worked when he put no strain upon it can be gauged by the inferiority of those characters to whom he paid most homage. Only one among his heroes and heroines is a great creation, and that is the noble peasant girl, Jeanie Deans, whose character and story, in *The Heart of Midlothian,* were based on fact. Caleb Balderstone, Nicol Jarvie, and Andrew Fairservice seem to have been intended as foils to their betters. Meg Dods and the

tap-room company in *St. Ronan's Well* were simply meant to set off the higher comedy of the tea-table, which is almost a failure. Even the royal Polonius, King James, and Jingling Geordie served but to give comic relief to what he considered graver matters in *The Fortunes of Nigel*. His humour was of the genuine brand, unconscious. When he deliberately tried to write comedy, as in *Woodstock*, *St. Ronan's Well*, and elsewhere, Scott was anything but uniformly successful. But then Dalgetty, whom he unwittingly loves too much to make really ridiculous, or the landlady Meg Dods, come in uninvited to play their diverting parts, and the novel as Scott had planned it loses its construction, but becomes a masterpiece. Scott had only to surrender himself, and let the *dramatis personæ* speak and act, to be triumphant.

His Style.—The commonplaceness of his ordinary prose style compared with the vigour and distinction of the dialogue is a standing proof of this. Scott never freed his diction from the shackles of Johnsonian prose. His style has many good qualities, but it is charmless, pedestrian, and sometimes stilted. His dialogue, on the contrary, has never been bettered. Whatever the race, rank, or character of the speaker, what is said is always natural and in perfect dramatic keeping. The anguished Queen of Scots, Vich Ian Vohr's clansmen offering their lives for their chief, Jeanie Deans refusing to prevaricate to save her sister's life, Andrew Fairservice, Edie Ochiltree, Peter Peebles, King James, and all the other humorists uttering their shrewd comments, and in truth the entire host of his characters, except those, like his professed lovers, who talk a genteel rhetoric, speak a language that comes from the heart and expresses the whole character of the speaker. Here he worked with least effort and least consciousness of his task.

Scott's Influence.—This is a wide departure from Fielding's theory of deliberate intellectual construction. With the advent of Scott, fiction reasserts the rights of free poetic creation. That he was the real founder of that wonderfully prolific form, the historical novel, and a model to innumerable English and foreign romancers, hardly needs pointing out. But his influence reached much further. After Scott came Dickens, in whom illimitable sympathy with any aspect of human nature found endless material for portraiture in the humblest classes. Dickens also, with some indebtedness to Smollett's grotesques and some to Sterne, availed himself further of the right to create beings that transcend experience. The Scots novelist, Galt, followed Scott as well as Smollett in exploiting the characters and humours of Lowland village life: the "Kailyard School" of later days owes something to both. And Scott's delight in picturing life merely for the sake of life, which, in the absence of any motive for misreading or distorting it, made his story-telling unrivalled in its simple air of relating the truth and evoking an atmosphere of plain reality, had its effect on later novelists both in their theory and their craftsmanship.

OTHER NOVELISTS

SUSAN EDMONDSTONE FERRIER (1782–1854).—Miss Ferrier stands in much the same relation to Maria Edgeworth as Fanny Burney stands to Fielding. She wrote three ill-constructed Scottish novels, *Marriage* (1818), *The Inheritance* (1824), and *Destiny* (1831), all showing acute observation, caustic delineation of character, and the sharp contrasts of manners in a society where Highland chiefs and uncouth lairds jostle rich vulgarians and people from the world of fashion. *Marriage* is the story of a young English lady's elopement with the son of a Highland laird, and *The Inheritance* of an heiress courted by a mercenary lover but eventually married to the right one. This latter contains her best character, the incorrigible gossip and busybody, Miss Pratt. *Destiny* has a scathing portrait in the Presbyterian minister M'Dow.

JOHN GALT (1779–1839).—Galt adopted the epistolary method of *Humphry Clinker* in *The Ayrshire Legatees* (1820), in which an Ayrshire minister and his wife, a homely pair, their over-educated son and sentimental daughter, come to London, and relate their experiences from very different points of view. *The Annals of the Parish* (1821), written earlier, is a history of society on a small scale, the minister of a parish setting down in a journal his observations of men and women, the echoes of historical events during an epoch of change (1760–1810), and the irruption of ideas from the controversies over the American War of Independence to the growth of philosophical radicalism after the French Revolution. Later novels like *The Provost*, *The Entail*, and *The Last of the Lairds*, further exemplify a kind of portraiture more akin to Smollett's pungent style than Scott's genial drawing of Lowland character. Near Galt may be placed **D. M. MOIR'S** *Life of Mansie Wauch, Tailor in Dalkeith* (1828). Moir wrote the final chapters of *The Last of the Lairds*. **JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART** also wrote a novel of Scottish life, *Adam Blair* (1822), a gloomy story of passion and remorse in which a minister enacts the part afterwards so magnificently handled in *The Scarlet Letter* of Hawthorne.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785–1866).—The novels of Peacock, who also wrote a poem, *Rhododaphne*, and interspersed many delightful lyrics and snatches of verse largely of a convivial strain, throughout his stories, stand quite by themselves. They begin with *Headlong Hall* (1816) and end with *Gryll Grange* (1860), in between coming *Melincourt*, *Nightmare Abbey*, *Maid Marian*, *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, and *Crotchet Castle*. Peacock had a genius for amiable and most diverting satire, in a period given to violent disputes on both political and literary questions. *Headlong Hall* is a Rabelaisian skit on contemporary men of letters, philosophers, and others whom the author classed as faddists. *Melincourt* has a Gulliverian plot, bringing a tame monkey, Sir Oran Haut-ton, on the stage, and putting him up for Parliament. It is highly personal, Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Canning, and other well-known

persons figuring. Byron, Shelley, and Coleridge also appear under thin disguises and in ridiculous rôles in *Nightmare Abbey*. *The Misfortunes of Elphin* travesties the Reform Bill agitation under the guise of ancient Welsh history and the dereliction of the bibulous Seithenyn, who lets the great dyke fall out of repair and the sea break in. In *Crotchet Castle* and *Gryll Grange* the Aristophanic mockery is less personal but not less amusing, and some admirable comic figures, like Dr. Opimian and the athletic parson and exposer of shams, Dr. Folliott, make great play in the dialogue.

FREDERICK MARRYAT (1792–1848).—Captain Marryat wrote a dozen novels of the sea and a picaresque story, *Japhet in Search of a Father*, which were partly historical, his own reminiscences of naval life being utilized in several to reconstruct episodes of the great wars that were going on in his boyhood. *Frank Mildmay* (1829), *The King's Own* (1830), and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) were all three composed on this plan. The hero of *Peter Simple* (1834), with Mr. Chucks and romancing Captain Kearney, "Old Tom" and others in *Jacob Faithful*, Mr. Easy, and the grotesque Lieutenant Vanslyperken, with Short and the Widow, in *Snarleyyow, or the Dog Fiend* (1837), are nautical figures reminiscent of Smollett, without his unpleasantness.

MICHAEL SCOTT (1789–1835), a Glasgow merchant, wrote two vivid novels of life in the merchant service, *Tom Cringle's Log* (1833) and *The Cruise of the Midge* (1834), full of the magic of the ocean, and overflowing with the same kind of rough humour.

HISTORICAL NOVELISTS.—Sir Walter Scott gave a tremendous impetus to the historical novel, both at home and abroad. Even Galt and Lockhart attempted the genre. In the second quarter of the century his imitators were a host. The most industrious was G. P. R. James, who systematically worked episodes of "feigned history" from the times of Attila to the English Revolution, making capital mostly out of the French Wars of Religion and our Great Civil War. William Harrison Ainsworth had Gothic propensities. His *Rookwood* (1834) and *Jack Sheppard* (1839) were romances of villainy idealizing two famous criminals. *The Tower of London* (1840) and *Old St. Paul's* (1841) opened a series of picturesque novels of English history that exceeded James's dull chronicles in vivacity, though their effects were coarse and violent. Lever, Lytton, and even Dickens and Thackeray, wrote historical fiction, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—Numerous editions are available of Scott, Jane Austen, Miss Edgeworth, Captain Marryat, and several of the other novelists mentioned above.—Miss FERRIER's are published by Routledge and Dent

(6 vols., 1894).—GALT'S *Ayrshire Legatees* and *Annals of the Parish* (Macmillan, 1910); LOCKHART'S *Adam Blair* (Blackwood); MOIR'S *Mansie Wauch* (Blackwood, 1895); PEACOCK'S *Complete Works* (9 vols., Dent, 1891–2; 5 vols., Macmillan, 1895–7); MICHAEL SCOTT'S two novels are published by Blackwood, Macmillan, Routledge, and Nelson.

Critical Studies.—English Men of Letters: *Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, Scott* (Macmillan, v.y.).—SAINTSBURY, G.: *The English Novel* (Dent, 1913).—STEPHEN, Sir LESLIE: *Studies of a Biographer—Scott*, etc. (4 vols., Duckworth, 1898–1902).—YOUNG, C. A.: *The Waverley Novels: an Appreciation* (MacLehose, 1907)

Chapter 4. REVIEWERS, CRITICS, AND ESSAYISTS

Foundation of the great Reviews and Magazines: the *Edinburgh, Quarterly, Blackwood, London Magazine, Fraser,* etc.—Coleridge—Charles Lamb: the *Essays of Elia*—Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt—Landor and De Quincey

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

With the 18th century had begun the palmy days of the periodical essay. With the beginning of the 19th century the modern periodical review and magazine started on the same lines as they still continue. A number of literary, social, and antiquarian magazines appeared during the 18th century and flourished for varying periods. Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine,* established in 1731, continued till late into the reign of Victoria. But most were very short-lived. Thus an early *Edinburgh Review,* liberal in views like its great successor, ran for only two numbers in 1755, being reprinted with a preface in the less inclement atmosphere of 1818.

The "Edinburgh Review."—It was in 1802 that the present *Edinburgh Review* made its appearance. Its publishers were Constable of Edinburgh and Longman and Rees of London, and its first editor was Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850), who was assisted by Sydney Smith (1771–1845) and Henry Brougham (1778–1868). The objects of the new review were both literary and political, and its opinions Whiggish. The party spirit with which these were expressed, in both spheres of criticism, soon alienated Scott, who was an intimate friend of Jeffrey and contributed a dozen articles during the first few years. Nor did liberalism or sympathetic understanding of the new movement in English letters mark the judgments on books and authors promulgated by Jeffrey and his friends, who delivered their verdicts with the magisterial air of the literary censor. Jeffrey declared of Wordsworth's *Excursion,* "This will never do." Southey was treated as an anarchist trying to disestablish the orthodox principles of poetry and criticism. Brougham wrote a review of Byron's *Hours of Idleness* that drew forth the trenchant satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* The violence and unfairness of the *Edinburgh* were not long in provoking rivalry, and the Tory *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* took up the cudgels on the other side. Jeffrey was succeeded in the editorship by Macvey Napier, behind whom was the opinionated force and obstinacy of Brougham, raised to the peerage in 1830 on becoming Lord Chancellor. For many years Macaulay was a chief pillar of the review, in the pages of which his famous *Essays* first appeared.

The "Quarterly Review."—Scott had a good deal to do with the establishment of the *Quarterly,* which was published by Murray in 1809, with an editor as dictatorial

as Jeffrey in William Gifford (1756–1826), author of two satires, *The Baviad* (1794) and *The Mæviad* (1795), ridiculing the Della Cruscan school of poets, and editor of *The Anti-Jacobin* (1797–8). His chief coadjutors, besides Scott, were John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854) and Southey. At his death Lockhart took the editorial chair, and but for a short interval held it from 1825 to 1853, being succeeded by the judicial and scholarly Whitwell Elwin. Both reviews were conducted on the new principle of adequate pay to contributors, and turned out very profitable ventures, the circulation in each case growing in 1818–19 to the satisfactory figure of 14,000 copies.

"Blackwood's Magazine."—The founder and publisher of *Blackwood's Magazine*, Mr. Blackwood of Edinburgh, had a different aim from that of the heavy and serious quarterlies. He proposed to interest and amuse the public, as well as discharge light artillery on the Tory side. After missing fire in his first three numbers, he enlisted a brilliant editorial group in Lockhart, John Wilson (1785–1854), better known as "Christopher North," and James Hogg (1770–1835), the Ettrick Shepherd. This set of slashing critics and jovial literary athletes was joined in 1819 by an Irishman of kindred gifts and spirit, Maginn. Wilson and Lockhart gave their first number a noisy advertisement by inserting a very amusing skit, called the "Chaldee MS.," written in scriptural language, and satirizing the best-known people in Edinburgh in an impudently personal manner. Their violence and horseplay did not end here, but was for some time a characteristic of "Maga," especially in its attentions to Leigh Hunt's Radical journal the *Examiner* and to the Cockney school of poetry. Eventually, reciprocal abuse between *Blackwood* and the *London Magazine* led to a challenge, the result of which was that the editor of the latter, John Scott, was shot.

"Noctes Ambrosianæ."—In 1822 the series of papers jointly written by the four contributors mentioned, the lion's share by Wilson, entitled *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, began to appear, and continued till 1835. They were ostensibly dialogues carried on at Ambrose's tavern in Edinburgh by "Christopher North," the Ettrick Shepherd, and two other characters, one representing Maginn; and dealt in a fearless, truculent, and humorous fashion with political, social, and literary topics of the day. The different characters and points of view of the interlocutors are admirably sustained; there is a continuous flow of boisterous wit and fancy; and contemporaries enjoyed the piquancy of recognizing living persons introduced under flimsy disguises or even their own names.

Other Periodicals.—Among the other periodicals that flourished in the first quarter of the century were Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, edited for a while by the poet Campbell, and the *Westminster Review*, which lasted much longer. More prominent in the literary world were the *London Magazine* and *Fraser's*. The *London* was issued from 1820 to 1829, and numbered among its most active contributors

De Quincey, Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt. *Fraser's Magazine*, founded in 1830, was a leading journal for a considerable period, having the distinction—one it did not appreciate—of printing Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* in its pages.

Principal Contributors.—It was not till the middle of the century and the time of Matthew Arnold that literary criticism caught up the Romantic Movement. Poets have to create their public; and, except for a rare heaven-born interpreter like Coleridge, must wait for both critics and readers to be educated. The reviews and the magazines, even the liberal *Edinburgh*, distinguished themselves in their literary reviewing by standing fast on established conventions, and repressing every revolutionary tendency with their utmost strength. Their narrow dogmatism and self-sufficiency are summed up in Francis Jeffrey, afterwards Lord Jeffrey, first editor of the *Edinburgh*, who was a Scottish advocate and eventually a judge of the Court of Session. It must, however, be said in Jeffrey's favour that he learned enough to admit his errors when, at a later date, he published a selection of his critical articles. In handling the average writer he earned the title given him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* of "an impartial and acute critic." Gifford, the rival editor of the *Quarterly*, was as conservative as Jeffrey, and imposed his views more relentlessly on his contributors. Other representatives of the repressive school of criticism were Lockhart, whose sarcastic style earned him the sobriquet of "the Scorpion," and the vehement but narrow-minded Brougham. Sydney Smith, the one Englishman in the group who started the *Edinburgh*, was much less hide-bound. He distinguished himself by the gaiety and wit which he levelled against the men and things he believed to be in need of reform. His personalities were direct to what would now be considered an outrageous degree, but were mitigated by their abounding good-nature and lack of spite, as well as by their substantial justice.

COLERIDGE

Coleridge's ventures into periodical literature have been referred to in an earlier chapter, and also his illuminating critical work in the *Biographia Literaria*. Although everything he has left in prose exhibits the same discursiveness, lack of coherence, and disappointing incompleteness as his poetry, his critical work is the most penetrating and advanced that the period has bequeathed. His lectures on the dramatists are said to have been beset by his usual failings, but the notes which have come down to us are full of pregnant truths, some perhaps derived from German thinkers. Thus his introductory matter begins with a definition of poetry, which is none the worse for not being put with his wonted expansiveness.

> Poetry is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre. The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement, or communication, of truth; the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure.

He goes on to distinguish novels and other works which might be included in this definition, by pointing out the essentially emotional nature of poetry, which involves the activity of the whole mind, and necessarily expresses itself in language having definite artistic qualities. He comes, in fact, to the same position as in his *Biographia Literaria*.

Coleridge as Critic.—In that work he not only formed a detailed estimate of Wordsworth, both as a poet and an expositor of poetical theory, but he also left a succinct review of poets in general which is the finest critical utterance of an age strenuously busying itself with criticism. He took the reviewers sternly to task for their wrong methods, condemning in particular Jeffrey's famous article on *The Excursion*. The reviewer should open his survey with a statement of the "principles which he holds for the foundation of poetry in general, with the specification of these in their application to the different classes of poetry." His canons should then be applied to the work under examination, praise or censure being illustrated by passages that conform to or violate the rules. The reader will thus be led by a reasoned sequence of law and judgment to a thorough understanding of the doctrine enunciated. The *Biographia Literaria*, in its critical chapters, is a complete example of such a method. No one was so well fitted as Coleridge to interpret the romantic poets; and it is almost as great a disaster as the premature extinction of his own poetic genius that he was not the editor of a great review instead of men like Jeffrey and Gifford, and that he left so little of the critical and interpretative work that he planned. His *Omniana and Table-talk*, and *Anima Poetæ*, both posthumous, consist of wonderful morsels, tantalizing one with regrets for the banquet of which posterity has been defrauded.

CHARLES LAMB AND THE "ESSAYS OF ELIA"

Charles Lamb (1775–1834), the son of a barrister's clerk, was born in the Temple, and went to school with Coleridge at Christ's Hospital. He was first a clerk in the South Sea House (1789–92), and then in the India House (1792–1825), but always indulged an inborn fancy for literature, writing occasional articles and verses for the *Morning Post* and other papers, failing with a farce at Drury Lane, publishing a historical play in blank verse, *John Woodvil*, and contributing to various magazines, especially the *London* (1820–33). Lamb was never married. A man of the most lovable disposition, he undertook and fulfilled with affectionate devotion the guardianship of his sister, Mary Lamb, who in a fit of temporary insanity had killed her mother. The pair lived together till Charles's death, writing *Tales from Shakespeare* in collaboration, and visited by a select circle of devoted friends, among them James White, author of *The Falstaff Letters*, Edward Dyer, Charles Lloyd, Coleridge, and afterwards Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. For six weeks (1795–6) Lamb was a prey to the insanity that ran in the family, and took refuge in an asylum. Two years after

the publication of his *Essays of Elia* (1823) in a collected form, he retired with a satisfactory pension from the India House, and spent his last decade in honoured leisure at Enfield, corresponding with and often meeting his old friends and several new ones, including Procter, Darley, Talfourd, and Crabb Robinson. He died less than six months after his lifelong friend Coleridge.

Charles Lamb.
(From the painting by William Hazlitt.)

Works. — Among Lamb's earliest works were a few sonnets and other verses published with editions of Coleridge, and in a thin volume, *Blank Verse* (1797), by Lamb and Lloyd. Far the best piece was the tenderly pathetic *The Old Familiar Faces*. Later poems appeared in *Album Verses* (1830). A tragic story, *Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret*, appeared in 1798, the scene of which is Widford, near Ware, where stood the old mansion of Blakesware, commemorated with its poignant associations in the essay *Blakesmoor in H—shire*. His tragedy, *John Woodvil* (1802), was an outcome of his studies in the Elizabethan dramatists. In collaboration with his sister he wrote a set of ten stories for children, *Mrs. Leicester's School*, and that classic of the juvenile library, *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807). Another book for children, *The Adventures of Ulysses*, based on Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*, was entirely his own This and his *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*, an admirable selection equipped with notes equally admirable in their critical judgment and brevity, appeared in 1808. Lamb began essay-writing in 1810 in the *Reflector;* but it was not till 1820 that the first essay signed "Elia" came out in the *London Magazine*. The first collection of *Essays of Elia* appeared anonymously in 1823, and a second series, some time after he had severed his connection with the magazine, in 1833. His letters, with a life by Talfourd, appeared in 1837.

Characteristics.—It is the essential nature of the essay to be, in both matter and

form, the intimate expression of the writer, his mind, his life, and all that makes his individuality. Of Lamb's essays this is as eminently true as of Montaigne's. His essays are his best biography, and give his view of the world as completely as if he had written a score of novels. Lamb was a Londoner, who loved the town, especially all that was old and expressive of the human past in it, as he loved his relatives, his friends, and the dearest associations of his childhood. Never was a man to whom the past was more a vital part of his life in the present. The Temple, Christ's Hospital, and scores of places in London touched with old memories, were like living characters in Lamb's mind; and he cherished with the same fondness the spots in Hertfordshire linked with the early recollections of his mother and the grandmother, Mrs. Field, housekeeper of Blakesware, where he had spent childish days of romance. The depth of his affection is most endearingly evinced by his devotion to his sister, whom he tended, except when from time to time it was necessary to put her away, until his death. Yet this did not exhaust his fund of affection. He was loved by a circle of the choicest friends, and his friendships had no small part in the genesis of his essays as well as his delightfully intimate letters. To a degree to which there is no parallel, a love for Charles Lamb's writings is a love of the man himself. His affection and loyalty, his uncomplaining endurance, the simplicity of his character, shine out there in all their sweetness, and are made the more real by the sportive humour which alternates with his more serious moods. Lamb's writings are like the evenings described by Hazlitt:

> There was Lamb himself, the most delightful, the most provoking, the most witty and sensible of men. He always made the best pun and the best remark in the course of the evening. His serious conversation, like his serious writing, is his best. No one ever stammered out such fine, piquant, deep, eloquent things in half-a-dozen half-sentences as he does. His jests scald like tears; and he probes a question with a play upon words. What a keen, laughing, hare-brained vein of home-felt truth! What choice venom! How often did we cut into the haunch of letters, while we discussed the haunch of mutton on the table! How we skimmed the cream of criticism! How we got into the heart of controversy! How we picked out the marrow of authors!

"The Essays of Elia."—Lamb's essays were thus intensely personal and subjective, though with no trace of laboured introspection, and most charming in their apparent spontaneity and fluent ease. The apparent ease was, however, the result of art and effort. It was ten years after his first essays in Leigh Hunt's *Reflector* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* that Elia perfected his style. Both the language and the structure show the same careful workmanship. He noted down and assimilated quaint turns of phraseology, with his characteristic fondness for what was fine in an old-fashioned way. His style abounds in quotations from Sir Thomas Browne, Burton, Fuller, and the Elizabethan dramatists, quotations not verified and corrected, but evidently part of the furniture of his mind. His style is rich without the least showiness, because the metaphors are his natural mode of expressing himself. He is compact and pregnant without any apparent effort to be epigrammatic. The art is entirely concealed, and consequently to imitate his style is well-nigh impossible.

Lamb's subjects were places and their old associations, his relatives, his friends, old books, and all the tender, melancholy, humorous, or far-ranging trains of thought into which old writers led him. Into these reveries and disquisitions he infused the colour of his own tender, manly, and acute mind. He followed the lead of his fancy, humour, or mere boyish good spirits without being led astray. He is never diffuse; he leaves the reader pondering over fertile thoughts and rich trains of ideas newly connected with objects as old as antiquity.

A good example of his style is the essay on *Blakesmoor in H—shire*, where his memory conjures up the visions of boyish years:

> Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bedrooms —tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots— at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern, bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vivider than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.
>
> Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the daytime, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again?*

HAZLITT AND LEIGH HUNT

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778–1830).—Hazlitt was somewhat of a contrast to his fellow-essayist Lamb. Few people seem to have loved him; and this is not surprising in view of the vagaries of temper and opinion to which he obstinately held. The son of a Nonconformist minister, he was educated for the Unitarian ministry, but preferred to study painting, the art in which he thought it the highest earthly glory to be distinguished. He painted portraits of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, and others. A reading of Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* gave him his first idea of the power of writing, and he turned to the pen as a profession. He married an uncongenial wife, from whom he was divorced by mutual consent, and according to Scottish law. It was in her cottage at Winterslow on the Wiltshire downs that he gave himself to the delights of retirement, and later, at an inn hard by, he wrote many of his most characteristic essays. A strange episode in his life was his violent passion for a lodging-house keeper's daughter, who seems to have awakened the innate sensuousness that comes out again in his criticisms of the great painters. He talked freely about her charms to his friends, and committed the indiscretion of setting down his unsatisfied longings in a book entitled *Liber Amoris*. A second marriage with another uncongenial person ended more speedily than his first.

Works.—Hazlitt lectured on modern philosophers and the English poets, dramatists, and essayists; worked as parliamentary reporter and dramatic critic for the *Morning Chronicle;* and contributed to various journals and reviews, including Hunt's *Examiner*, the *Edinburgh*, the *London Magazine*, and Colburn's *New Monthly*

His writings, mostly of this miscellaneous and disconnected kind, take up a dozen volumes of close print. Those collections of essays that stand out with some distinctness of style or subject are, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817); *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818); *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819); *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1820); *Table-talk* (1821–2); *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), an anonymous work in which he drew vivid though often one-sided portraits of eminent contemporaries; another anonymous work, *The Plain Speaker* (1826); and a *Life of Napoleon*, in four volumes (1828–30), in which he vented his enthusiasm for his favourite hero. Two posthumous collections, *Sketches and Essays* (1839) and *Winterslow* (1850) contain many of his finest essays.

Characteristics.—Hazlitt wrote on a diversity of subjects, and always as a critic, if not of writers or painters, then of men and manners. For practical purposes, however, we may distinguish between those on general subjects and the critical essays proper, in which he set forth his judgments on other writers. He stands a long way below Lamb as an essayist; but his literary judgments put him in the first rank, at least among those who judge well and discriminatingly, without contributing much to the higher principles of writing or judging.

Hazlitt's essays, more especially those in the former group, are autobiographical, and tell frankly all there is to be known of his temperament, his tastes, his prejudices, enthusiasms, and limitations. For one with an unfeigned enjoyment of solitude, of the merits of "Living to One's Self" (the title of one of his best essays), he had an extraordinary gusto for life, and depicted it in vivid colours and in aspects of surprising variety. The infectious admiration he felt for Shakespeare or the Scottish novels of Sir Walter he could also feel and express for the brute courage of a prize-fighter. He loved to moralize, to discuss the varieties of such vices as hypocrisy, pride, prejudice, vulgarity, and affectation, such antitheses as thought and action, wit and humour, past and future, or questions like, "Whether genius is conscious of its powers," or "Why the heroes of romance are insipid." The points are argued and illustrated with abundance of quotations, especially from the great novelists and playwrights. But Hazlitt displays wrongheadedness almost as freely as sanity.

> The most moral writers [he says in another connection] are those who do not pretend to inculcate any moral. The professed moralist almost unavoidably degenerates into the partisan of a system; and the philosopher is too apt to warp the evidence to his own purpose.

This last is what Hazlitt, when he elaborates casuistical topics, is prone to do. His limitations were grievous in some directions, and it was just in such directions that he let himself go with least restraint. Thus he almost spoiled the fine discourse "On the Conduct of Life" by a jaundiced passage on the character of women. Though he had plenty of wit, especially of the grave sort, he had but a dubious sense of humour.

Hazlitt's Criticism.—Hazlitt is the foremost example of those critics who judge by intuition and not by the application of reasoned principles, which Coleridge declared to be the only safe method. The moment he begins to theorize, he betrays his weak grasp of the laws that might justify his conclusions. But it is rare indeed that his taste is at fault. No one before him had given such a wide survey of the great writers of the mediæval and modern worlds. He had to form his own estimates, and what saved him was the width and diversity of his reading. If he failed to formulate principles, he had at command an inexhaustible store of material for comparison. He also possessed two natural gifts—an instinctive enjoyment and enthusiasm for great literature, and a discerning eye for that which is genuine and first-rate. The enthusiasm comes out well in " My First Acquaintance with Poets," and his sure judgment in his estimate of Shakespeare, which is less philosophical than Coleridge's but not less inspiring. The characteristics of his appreciation are well seen in his remarks on Falstaff :

> He would not be in character, if he were not so fat as he is ; for there is the greatest keeping in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites.

The same qualities marked his essays on the old masters. He never failed to recognize imagination, to feel the presence of genius. His criticism of Poussin, Correggio, or Hogarth conveys a real sense of the greatness of their genius. But it was doubtless owing to his neglect of first principles that he was so erratic as to rank Ossian with Homer, the Bible, and Dante, as one of " the principal works of poetry in the world."

Style.—Hazlitt taught the virtues of a " familiar style " ; one colloquial in basis, yet never vulgar. " The best word in common use," employed according to " the true idioms of the language," was his whole doctrine of style. Short, straight sentences, containing simple propositions, follow each other with rarely a change of structure, yet without monotony, the aptness and often the brilliance of the vocabulary conveying the keenness of his appreciation, his enjoyment of life, every shade of his impressionism, with point and persuasiveness. This is how he begins the essay, " On Living to Oneself " :

> I never was in a better place or humour than I am at present for writing on this subject. I have a partridge getting ready for my supper, my fire is blazing on the hearth, the air is mild for the season of the year, I have had but a slight fit of indigestion to-day (the only thing that makes me abhor myself), I have three hours good before me, and therefore I will attempt it. It is as well to do it at once as to leave it to do for a week to come.

And here is a passage showing an unwonted effort at eloquence :

> It gives men liberal views ; it accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself ; to love virtue for its own sake ; to prefer fame to life, and glory to riches ; and to fix our thoughts on the remote and permanent instead of narrow and fleeting objects. It teaches

us to believe that there is something really great and excellent in the world, surviving all the shocks of accident and fluctuations of opinion, and raises us above that low and servile fear which bows only to present power and upstart authority. Rome and Athens filled a place in the history of mankind which can never be occupied again. They were two cities set on a hill, which could not be hid; all eyes have seen them, and their light shines like a mighty sea-mark into the abyss of time.

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859).—James Henry Leigh Hunt ranks as a writer considerably below the other men of letters considered in this section, yet considerably above the common herd of journalists and miscellaneous writers whose leader he was in many walks of literature. The aggregate of his writings, even apart from pure journalism, was voluminous, and he was as versatile as any Fleet Street hack. His special distinction is that he acted the part of a missionary or apostle of literature in the compilations or handbooks like his *Wit and Humour, Imagination and Fancy*, or *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*, in which he helps the young student to perceive and savour the essential qualities of fine literature. His *Book for a Corner*, a combined anthology and commentary, must have given a first inkling of the delights of literature to many a hobbledehoy. Of his poetry, which is considerable in quantity, only the *Story of Rimini* (1816) and one or two short pieces are remembered to-day.

Life and Works.—Two years after he had ceased to be a schoolboy at Christ's Hospital, in 1801, Hunt published a volume of poems called *Juvenilia*, which met with a lenient reception. He wrote dramatic criticism and other contributions for his brother's paper, the *News*, and in 1808 began to edit a weekly, the *Examiner*, started by him and his brother. This ran till 1821, and its advanced political views and intransigence landed the pair in several government prosecutions, and at last in jail, for calling the Prince Regent "an Adonis of fifty." Leigh Hunt continued to edit the *Examiner* during his imprisonment, which was solaced by visits from Byron, Moore, Lamb, and Bentham. After his release, he became a friend of Shelley and Keats, whose praises he sang in his journal. The best-known of his poetical works, *The Story of Rimini* (1816), in which he ventured to tell again the tale of Paolo and Francesca, forsook the practice of a pause in sense at the close of the rhymed ten-syllable couplet, and gave the cue to Keats's flowing use of that metre in *Endymion*. The poem has many fine passages of sensuous description, but is ruined in places by sentimentalism and sheer vulgarity. Leigh Hunt's cavalier treatment of other poets was retorted in kind by sneers from *Blackwood* and the other northern reviewers at the Cockney school. His conceit and mawkishness made him an easy prey.

In 1821 Hunt joined Shelley and Byron in Italy, and for a time ran a journal, the *Liberal*, dealing with political, social, and religious matters. In his *Recollections of Lord Byron*, published on his return, he threw the blame for its failure on his friend. He made several further ventures as a proprietor and editor, and contributed to many other periodicals, from the *Westminster* and *Edinburgh* to

Fraser's Magazine and the *Spectator*. His more important books, besides those already mentioned, were *Stories from the Italian Poets* (1846); *Men, Women, and Books* (1847); *The Town* (1848); *Autobiography* (1850); *Table-talk* (1851); *The Old Court Suburb* (1855); and two further editions of his poetical works.

Characteristics.—No subject came amiss to such a practised journalist as Leigh Hunt; but it is his books of gossip on London, Kensington, and their old inhabitants, in a style which is a modernized edition of Steele's and Addison's, and his expositions of literature, already referred to, that retain interest now. He was by no means a great independent critic, but he was happy at interpreting the higher principles for the benefit of the neophyte. "Poetry is imaginative passion" states a part of the truth with felicity; and many have doubtless learned their first notions of æsthetic analysis from such definitions as this of fancy (in *Imagination and Fancy*), "a lighter play of imagination, or the feeling of analogy coming short of seriousness." Some pages further on he continues:

> She is a younger sister of imagination, without the other's weight of thought and feeling. Imagination indeed, purely so called, is all feeling; the feeling of the subtlest and most affecting analogies; the perception of sympathies in the nature of things, or in their popular attributes. Fancy is a sporting with their resemblances, real or supposed, and with airy and fantastical creations.

LANDOR AND DE QUINCEY

Landor's Prose Works.—The devotion to the Greek and Latin classics, the marmoreal grandeur and majesty of his style, and the corresponding nobility of thought and weighty sententiousness, characteristic of Landor's poetry, also distinguish his work in prose. This consists of five volumes of *Imaginary Conversations* (1824–9); the *Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare* (1834); *Pericles and Aspasia* (1836); *The Pentameron and Pentalogia* (1837), and *Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans* (1853). With the exception of *Pericles and Aspasia*, which was in letters, these consisted of dialogues, in which famous personages, usually of the same past age but sometimes from different periods, deliver their opinions on some problem of ethics or statecraft or human destiny, or appear in colloquy at some dramatic crisis. Thus they fall into two main groups, dramatic dialogues and dialogues of reflection. Altogether they number nearly a hundred and fifty.

Dramatic Dialogues.—The dramatic dialogues are as a rule shorter than the others, and deal often with imaginary incidents, such as might conceivably have taken place in the circumstances of the time. Though Landor took little trouble to refresh his memory on the facts of history, his vast reading, and his affinity for what was great and heroic, enabled him to recreate scenes and characters with truth and insight. The dialogues between Marius and Metellus, Marcellus and Han-

nibal, Tiberius and Vipsania, give a lofty idea of the spirit of ancient Rome. Not less eloquently are the Middle Ages evoked in those between Joan of Arc and Agnes Sorel, Leofric and Godiva, John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, Tancredi and Constantia, Leonora di Este and Panigarola. Later ages yielded some comparable with these—between Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, Essex and Spenser, Lady Lisle and Lady Elizabeth Gaunt, Bossuet and the Duchesse de Fontanges. Though he was never good at telling a story, Landor's thrifty method of indicating rather than describing justifies itself in the tense drama of the dialogues, where by means of silence as well as speech he makes us feel the effects of incidents that are not related. But he disdains to be realistic. His characters live in an ideal world: all is generalized, remote, and in consequence vague. This is a fault of the academic mind, and accounts for the relative failure of many dialogues.

Reflective Dialogues.—In the less dramatic dialogues, where Landor was less intent on realizing a specific character, he tends to become a ventriloquist, putting his own opinions and meditations into the mouth of his characters. Except for the attraction of his splendid style, the interest becomes purely intellectual. And though Landor could put time-honoured platitudes into a new and arresting form, and his thoughts always have a certain sanity and individuality, he was a poor reasoner, and could not disguise triteness and shallowness from those who look below the superficial beauty of his phrasing. The sentiments are always noble; the aphorisms have the merit of a perfect equipoise of force and grace; the same beauty marks the fables occasionally introduced. It is only when we regard him as a thinker that his deficiencies become apparent.

Style.—Landor's prose style, like his diction in verse, was affected largely by his habit of writing in Latin. The following is from the last letter of Pericles to Aspasia:

> It is right and orderly, that he who has partaken so largely in the prosperity of the Athenians, should close the procession of their calamities. The fever that has depopulated our city returned upon me last night, and Hippocrates and Acron tell me that my end is near.
>
> When we agreed, O Aspasia, in the beginning of our loves, to communicate our thoughts by writing, even while we were both in Athens, and when we had many reasons for it, we little foresaw the more powerful one that has rendered it necessary of late. We never can meet again. The laws forbid it, and love itself enforces them. Let wisdom be heard by us as imperturbably, and affection as authoritatively, as ever; and remember that the sorrow of Pericles can arise but from the bosom of Aspasia. There is only one word of tenderness we could say, which we have not said oftentimes before; and there is no consolation in it. The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell. . . .

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859).—Landor and De Quincey are the two chief masters of rhetorical prose in this period. Landor wrote poetry also; but De Quincey never attempted verse, claiming, however, to have attained similar effects by his novel handling of the resources of prose. He was born on the outskirts of Manchester, one of the eight children of a well-to-do merchant; went to

school at Bath and Manchester, and ran away. His wanderings in North Wales and in London; his hunger, his meeting with the outcast of the streets, and how he came first to take opium, are told in his *Confessions*. Eventually he was induced to go to Oxford, where his knowledge of Greek astonished the examiners. But he left without a degree, and led an unsettled life, now in London calling on Lamb, and now visiting Coleridge at Bristol and Wordsworth at Grasmere. When Wordsworth left his cottage De Quincey took it, and occupied it for twenty years. It was at Grasmere that he became a slave to the opium habit, and here he began his married life. In 1821 his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* appeared in the *London Magazine*, and their author became famous. His life from now consisted of alternate periods of indulgence and torpor, and fits of literary activity. He spent perhaps a quarter of his life in London, till 1825, when he transferred his services as a contributor from the *London* to *Blackwood*. In 1843 he removed with his family to a village near Edinburgh. About fifty papers by De Quincey have been reprinted from *Blackwood*. Another outlet for his work was *Tait's Magazine*, to which he contributed about as many. His only work published as a book was *The Logic of Political Economy*. His essays were first collected in an American edition in twenty volumes, which De Quincey ultimately sanctioned, and he revised an English edition in fourteen volumes (1853–60), under the title *Selections Grave and Gay*, to which many additions have been made since.

Works.—The following are the most important of the groups into which De Quincey's miscellaneous essays may be assorted: Autobiographic Writings, headed by the *Confessions;* Biographical Essays, including the study of Kant's metaphysics; Historical Studies, ranging from the scholarly research evinced in *Cæsar* and *The Essenes*, to those dream-transfigured narratives, *The Revolt of the Tartars* and *The Spanish Military Nun;* Speculative and Theological Essays; Political Economy and Politics; Literary Theory and Criticism, comprising the essay, *On Style*, where he defends impassioned writing unfettered by metre, concluding, "after it has ceased to be a badge of inspiration, metre will be retained as a badge of professional distinction;" and the final and most important class, Imaginative Writings, including, along with miscellaneous trifles, his masterpieces in impassioned prose.

Characteristics.—De Quincey's scholarship was wider even than Landor's, and his versatility than that of Hazlitt. What is more surprising is, that a man of such a nervous and retiring disposition should have such an extensive knowledge of human nature and public and private affairs. He was a thinker; but unfortunately his projected studies of German metaphysics never got beyond Lessing and Kant. He wrote critical estimates of Pope, Richter, Wordsworth, and others. He understood and appreciated the romantic poets, though he was obtusely prejudiced against Keats and Shelley. His sardonic humour shows best in his *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts*. But his most characteristic theme was himself

—his sensations, tumults of the brain, and those impressions of the material and the ideal worlds that were blended and transfigured in his opium dreams.

His Subjective Writings.—A large and the most distinctive part of De Quincey's writings have been aptly described as "impassioned autobiography." These consist not only of the *Confessions* and his *Autobiographic Sketches*, but also of his dream narratives, and many other studies in which he viewed what he described or related through an atmosphere of dream. His introspective habit of mind was not originally due to opium, though this intensified it abnormally. Its development can be traced in the *Autobiographic Sketches*, where early incidents reappear transformed by the poetry of remembrance, and proceed to a higher stage of transfiguration in the dream echoes. He tells how a loved sister, nine years old when he was six, died, and how he surreptitiously visited the chamber where her body lay, and realized for the first time the meaning of death.

> I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and, whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries . . . it is in this world the one great symbol of eternity.
>
> Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fullness of life, the pomps of the heavens above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me.

Psychological experiences of deep suffering or joy, he says, first attain their entire fullness of expression when they are reverberated from dreams. In *The English Mail Coach* he exhibits the process of transformation, from the actual incident that first impressed him to the gorgeous and sublime visions into which they expanded in the *Dream-Fugue*. *The Revolt of the Tartars* is an example of a piece of history poetized by a similar process of visualization.

De Quincey's natural attitude was a form of egoism, free from selfishness and from self-conceit. With intense concentration and yet a calm detachment he studied his inner life, as a being in an infinite universe, as an individual in an infinite multitude of human beings. Whatever the subject, he approached it, to borrow his own phrase, by "making himself central"; and thus, in a natural and spontaneous way, was able to deal with themes in prose that had hitherto found expression only in the higher kinds of lyric poetry.

Style.—An instrument of extraordinary compass was needed for such a feat. De Quincey had an example for his daring use of prose in the works of that bold dreamer, Jean Paul Richter. Thence he learned the swift transitions from earth to the empyrean, his continual personification, making abstractions the subjects of predicates as if they were living things, the vivid metaphors, and the elaborate similes, in which every correspondence is exhausted for the sake of perfect clearness as well as for ornament's sake. Aiming at the effects of impassioned verse, De Quincey

required stately rhythms and complicated harmonies. Only a predominantly Latin vocabulary would furnish this majestic movement; and the sentences must be complex, and for the most part periodic in structure, holding the attention in suspense to the full-orbed close. But the complex rhythm did not end with the sentence: it beat throughout the paragraph, in which the sentences were co-ordinated with the same elaboration—the intricacy being often increased by his bad habit of digressing.

In De Quincey we see the culmination of romantic prose. He was of the school of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and had unconscious affinities with Shelley and Keats: but his prose-masters were Raleigh, Jeremy Taylor, and Sir Thomas Browne. The evolution of an ornate and emotional prose, having kindred properties to those of verse, which had begun with Berners and Lyly, reached its highest modern development in him.

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Chapter 5. THE SECOND WAVE OF ROMANTIC POETRY

Tennyson: Classic and Romantic Poems, English Idylls; *In Memoriam, Idylls of the King;* Dramas—Browning: Early Poems; *Dramatic Lyrics, Men and Women, The Ring and the Book;* Later Works—Matthew Arnold—Clough—Mrs. Browning

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809–92)

Life.—Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire, on August 6, 1809. In 1826 he and his brother Charles published in collaboration a small volume of verse, entitled *Poems by Two Brothers.* In 1828 he entered Cambridge, and the next year gained the Chancellor's English medal for a poem on *Timbuctoo.* In 1833 a heavy blow fell upon him in the death of his dear friend Arthur Hallam. In 1850 he married Emily Sellwood, and was appointed poet laureate in succession to Wordsworth. Thenceforth his life was placid and uneventful. Active in his art to the last, he died at Farringford, near Freshwater, Isle of Wight, on October 6, 1892. He had been raised to the peerage in 1883 as Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford.

Alfred Tennyson.

Works.—His principal publications are: *Poems, chiefly Lyrical* (1830); *Poems* (1833); *Poems* (1842); *The Princess* (1847); *In Memoriam* (1850); *Maud* (1855); *Idylls of the King* (1859–85); *Enoch Arden* (1864); *Queen Mary* (1875); *Harold* (1876); *Ballads,* etc. (1880); *The Cup and the Falcon* (1884); *Becket* (1884); *Tiresias and other Poems* (1885); *Locksley Hall Sixty Years after* (1886); *Demeter and other Poems* (1889); *The Death of Œnone,* etc. (1892).

Character.—Tennyson's character was remarkable for the combination of ruggedness and delicacy. "He was noble, simple, manly, reverent as well as strong, with a frankness which might at times seem rough, but which was never inconsistent with the finest courtesy and the gentlest heart."[1] Morbidly shy of strangers and with a horror of publicity, he shunned the general intercourse of men. His devotion to his art was admirable, but his recluse-like habits narrowed his outlook upon life and left their mark upon his work.

Views on Religion.—Tennyson's temper was hesitant and timorous.

> What use to brood? this life of mingled pains
> And joys to me,
> Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains
> The Mystery.—*To Mary Boyle.*

By the burden of this mystery he was always haunted. But he found firm ground in two positive affirmations which he regarded as data of consciousness—God and immortality. He once, James Knowles records, formulated "quite deliberately his own religious creed in these words": "There's a Something that watches over us, and our individuality endures; that's my faith, and that's all my faith."[2] His theology was vague and fluctuating, and speculation occasionally led him rather far afield; but on the whole his ideas were in harmony with the liberal or Broad Church movement of his time.

Politics and Society.—In general terms Tennyson may be described as an exponent of the very cautious Liberalism of the mid-Victorian age. Dread of revolution, of rash rupture with the past, of intemperate experiments, and of "raw haste, half sister to delay," lay at the very root of his thought, and made him essentially the poet of tradition and order. Yet he was an apostle of gradual progress and of the freedom which "slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent." In early manhood he was moved to enthusiasm by the new developments in science and commerce:

> Not in vain the distance beckons, forward, forward let us range;
> Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.—*Locksley Hall.*

But the sanguine mood presently gave place to one of profound alarm at the results of science and commerce in the materialization of life and thought:

> Forward rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one;
> Let us cease this cry of Forward till ten thousand years be gone.
> *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.*

His belief in evolution, always a steadying element in his thought, brought a certain hope back to him at the end; but while he had faith in a cosmic purpose his philosophy required countless years for its consummation:

[1] Lord Selborne, in *Memoir*, II., 459. [2] *Nineteenth Century*, January 1893.

But if twenty millions of summers are stored in the sunlight still,
We are far from the noon of man, there is time for the race to grow.—*The Dawn.*

In democracy he had no confidence, and while he showed genuine sympathy with the masses, it was obviously the sympathy of an aristocratic outsider.

Poetic Theory.—Tennyson had the highest conception of the poet's vocation. The moral and spiritual power of poetry was always uppermost in his mind: "great is song used to great ends."[1] The doctrine of "art for art's sake" was for him a pestilent heresy. "There is something better than art for art's sake," he told a friend, "and that is art for man's sake."[2] At the same time, he attached the greatest importance to technique and to the labour which is requisite for the attainment of perfection. "The poet is made as well as born," was one of his characteristic maxims.

Poems.—CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC POEMS.—The classic poems (*Œnone, The Lotos-Eaters, Ulysses, Tithonus, Lucretius, Tiresias, Demeter and Persephone*) contain some of Tennyson's finest work. Like Keats, he was enamoured of the beauty of classic story; like Wordsworth, he brought out its implicit moral meaning. It was in these semi-dramatic, semi-lyrical pieces that he found the right vehicle for what was undoubtedly his forte, the expression of a complex mood, with exquisite landscape harmonies. Except the epical but fragmentary *Morte d'Arthur*, the romantic poems (*The Lady of Shalott, Sir Galahad*, etc.) are much slighter things.

ENGLISH IDYLS AND KINDRED POEMS.—In these Tennyson followed Wordsworth in the poetry of simple life. Some of them (e.g., *The Brook, Aylmer's Field, Enoch Arden*) are admirable examples of careful workmanship, and one—*Dora*—received the high praise of Wordsworth himself. It is proof of his extraordinary versatility that he did such work so well, for it was really out of his natural line. The dialect poems (*The Grandmother, Northern Farmer, Spinster's Sweetarts*, etc.) are, however, the fruit of first-hand experience.

The Princess is a contribution to the question of the higher education of women in the form of a serio-comic fantasy. The thesis expounded is the eternal dualism of sex: "woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse."

In Memoriam was in origin an elegy on Arthur Hallam; but the theme expanded under the poet's hands, and so the work, without ceasing to be personal, became a great religious poem as well. It records the spiritual struggles which followed upon his friend's death, and sets forth his faith in God, immortality, and the "one far-off divine event To which the whole creation moves."

OTHER RELIGIOUS POEMS.—All through life Tennyson brooded much over religious questions. In the early *Two Voices* he debated the value of existence; in the late *Ancient Sage* he returned to the same subject. *Vastness* is a striking exposition of his favourite theme that without immortality life would be worthless. *Akbar's Dream* is a superb prophecy of that universal religion of the spirit which men will ultimately reach through varying forms and rituals.

[1] *The Princess.* [2] Cf. *The Palace of Art.*

In *Maud: a Monodrama* he protested against the materialism of the age, from which society is to be purged by the enthusiasm of a great war (the Crimean War). It was at first disliked, but it has scenes of great power, and contains some of Tennyson's finest poetry.

The *Idylls of the King* are twelve stories from the Arthurian cycle. Episodes from Malory are turned into a parable of "sense at war with soul," and the downfall of Arthur's kingdom presented as the result of the co-operation of two forces—sensuality and the perversion of religion.

DRAMAS.—Tennyson was already nearing old age when he broke fresh ground in the drama. His three historical plays—*Harold*, *Becket*, and *Queen Mary*—deal with great crises in the history of the English people, and thus have a national significance. But these and his minor plays—*The Promise of May*, *The Falcon*, *The Cup*, *The Foresters*—have little importance.

Characteristics. — Extraordinary variety, a reflection of the many-sidedness of modern life and the eclecticism of modern culture, is characteristic of Tennyson's work. His style is marked by a wonderful combination of simplicity and ornateness; he is always absolutely clear and is rarely merely plain. His lyrical measures (many of which were his own invention) have often supreme beauty. As a poet of man he throws the emphasis always upon the need of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," upon the dangers of all excess, and upon the sanctity of the moral law. His treatment of Nature is mainly pictorial. In detail he is as accurate as Wordsworth, but he has none of Wordsworth's spiritual feeling for Nature, which he looks at with the eye of the scientist as well as with that of the artist. The chief defect of his work as a whole is a want of virility. At times he descends to mere prettiness; his pathos is occasionally cheap; his sentiment is of the kind which easily degenerates into sentimentalism.

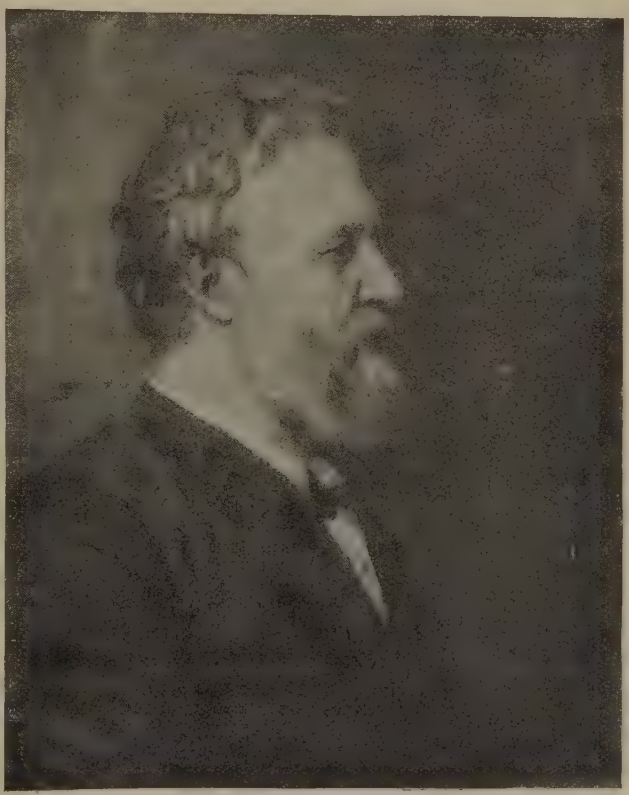
However much criticism may fluctuate in respect of the absolute value of Tennyson's work, his place as the representative poet of his age cannot be challenged. He was the supreme interpreter of the complex life of the Victorian era; he expressed in language of exquisite beauty the thoughts, feelings, struggles, and aspirations of those whom he addressed; and even his weaknesses—his narrowness, his insularity, his spirit of compromise—helped to ensure his popularity. His influence on other poets was, naturally, very great. Even the strongest of his younger contemporaries felt it, while innumerable minor singers imitated his mannerisms and got "his tune by heart."

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–89)

Life.—Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, May 7, 1812, and was privately educated. His first published poem, *Pauline*, appeared in 1833. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett, then more widely known as a poet than himself. Their happy

married life was spent almost entirely in Florence. After Mrs. Browning's death in 1861, Browning settled in London, though he still made long visits to the Continent. In November 1889 he joined his son in Venice, and there he died on 12th December of that year.

Works.—*Pauline* (1833); *Paracelsus* (1835); *Strafford* (1837); *Sordello* (1840); *Bells and Pomegranates* (8 parts, 1841-6); *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* (1850); *Men and Women* (1855); *Dramatis Personæ* (1864); *The Ring and the Book* (1868–9); *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871); *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* (1871); *Fifine at the Fair* (1872); *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* (1873); *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875); *The Inn Album* (1875); *Pacchiarotto* (1876); *La Saisiaz* and *The Two Poets of Croisic* (1878); *Dramatic Idylls* (1879–80); *Jocoseria* (1883); *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884); *Parleyings with Certain People* (1887); *Asolando* (1889).



Robert Browning.
(From the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.)

Character.—Browning was a man of intense and vigorous personality; "his consciousness of health was vivid" (Mrs. Orr); he had a boundless capacity for enjoyment; loved life; was a familiar figure in society and a regular diner-out. Sound in body and mind, he was altogether unaffected by the melancholy which accompanied the spiritual upheaval of his age. His robust optimism, though stated in terms of the religious philosophy by which it was reinforced, had its roots in his healthy and happy nature.

Views on Religion and Ethics.—Browning takes his stand upon two absolute truths

—a spiritual faculty in man which enables him to know spiritual reality, and a spiritual reality that is to be known. These truths are transcendent to the intellect and are axiomatic :

> Call this—God, then, call that—soul, and both—the only facts for me.
> Prove them facts ? that they o'erpass my power of proving, proves them such.
> *La Saisiaz.*

God may be conceived under three aspects—as Power, as Wisdom, and as Love. But the soul craves divine love, and this it finds mainly through its own God-given faculty of love :

> Consider well !
> Were knowledge all that faculty then God
> Must be ignored : Love gains Him by first leap.
> *Ferishtah's Fancies : A Pillar at Sebzevar.*

This thought of a God of love and the correlative principle of the soul's eternal destiny (or personal immortality) provide the philosophical grounds of Browning's optimism. There is no secular solution of the mystery of life ; but such solution is furnished by the hereafter : " on earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven, a perfect round " (*Abt Vogler*). The present world is merely a gymnasium or training-school :

> Life is probation and the earth no goal,
> But starting-point of man.—*Ring and the Book*, X.

Yet this probationary view of life does not lead Browning to asceticism. We best prepare for the hereafter by making the fullest use of what now is. There is no conflict between the natural and the divine ; the natural is itself divine :

> This world's no blot nor blank
> For us ; it means intensely and means good.—*Fra Lippo Lippi.*

Browning's ethical teaching is, therefore, strenuous and militant. Life is to be met boldly, not evaded ; all experience is to be made subservient to individuality and growth ; whatever stirs the soul out of its self-contentment and apathy is beneficial :

> Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go.—*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

Art and Poetry.—Browning's views of poetry and art correspond completely with these ethical principles. Here again, as in his whole attitude towards life, he combines high spirituality with the frankest acceptance of the natural world (*Old Pictures in Florence : Fra Lippo Lippi*) ; and here again he proclaims that the final standard of values is to be found, not in achievement, but in effort and aspiration : " 'Tis not what man Does that exalts him, but what man Would do " (*Saul*, XVIII.). Such a conception precludes dilettantism, virtuosity, and the worship of mere technique, and is fatal to any theory of art for art's sake. Browning, indeed, considers art

"as subordinate to life, and only valuable in so far as it expresses it."[1] The artist, whether painter or poet, is seer and interpreter; he perceives, as the ordinary man does not, the beauty and divine meaning of life, and he makes the ordinary man partaker of his vision (*Fra Lippo Lippi*). Browning's views as to the superiority of the "subjective" to the "objective" poet are expounded, not very lucidly, in the preface which he wrote for a collection of Shelley's letters (afterwards found to be forgeries).

Politics.—With his deeply-rooted faith in freedom as the essential condition for spiritual growth, Browning was in general terms a Liberal,[2] but his Liberalism was profoundly individualistic, and he was hostile to every form of Socialism. His interest in contemporary social and political questions was, however, very slight, and in the enormous mass of his work there is scarcely anything which bears upon them.

Poems.—EARLY POEMS.—*Pauline: a Fragment of a Confession;* a study in autobiographical form of the growth of a soul through many experiences and failures to final peace. The poem is difficult because, while the mental states are exhaustively analysed, their causes are unexplained. *Paracelsus:* an imaginative reconstruction of the life of the famous 16th-century physicist. It is composed of five scenes, each representing a spiritual crisis; its underlying motive is the need of both love and knowledge (or a balance of the intellectual and emotional natures) for the attainment of the perfect life. *Sordello:* the tale of an obscure Mantuan troubadour mentioned by Dante. The machinery of the action is furnished by the struggles of Guelphs and Ghibellines, Emperor and Pope; but "the historical decoration," Browning afterwards declared, "was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study" (*Dedication*, 1863). Each of these early poems "is in its different way the study of a human spirit, too ambitious to submit to the limits of human existence, and which learns humility in its unsuccessful conflict with them."[3]

DRAMAS.—*Strafford*, a tragedy on the impeachment and condemnation of Charles I.'s evil counsellor, was written at the request of Macready, who produced it at Covent Garden, May 1, 1837. *Pippa Passes* is a dramatic fantasy based on the idea of unconscious influence. In the four detached scenes which form the body of the work, Pippa passes by, singing, and life is changed for those who accidentally overhear her songs. *King Victor and King Charles* is an historical tragedy dramatizing an episode in the annals of the House of Savoy, 1730–1. In *The Return of the Druses*, a five-act tragedy, the central figure is the young enthusiast Djabal, who, in order to accomplish the deliverance of his people from the tyranny of the Knights of Rhodes, proclaims himself a reincarnation of Hakeem, the founder of the sect. The plot is fictitious; the date assigned, 14—. *A Blot i' the Scutcheon* is

[1] Orr's *Handbook*, p. 207. [2] See his sonnet, *Why I am a Liberal*. [3] Orr's *Handbook*, p. 17.

a powerful domestic drama. The construction shows that Browning had been studying stage technique; but from this point of view action is still overweighted with narrative. *Colombe's Birthday* is a simple and touching exhibition of the triumph of true love over worldly ambition, and *A Soul's Tragedy*, a study in two acts, of moral collapse under the influence of sudden success. Despite the title, the treatment is humorous. In *Luria*, an imaginary episode in the struggle between Florence and Pisa in the 15th century, Browning has thrown off the trammels of the stage and follows his own instincts, the drama being an elaborate study of character in which action is entirely subordinate to psychological interest. *In a Balcony*, a dramatic fragment, traces the entanglements of love and self-sacrifice. The characters are two women and a man. *Dramatic Lyrics; Dramatic Romances; Men and Women; Dramatis Personæ*, are collections of shorter poems containing much of Browning's very best work. Whether in the form of lyric or monologue, they are all "dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine." [1]

Christmas Eve and Easter Day, companion poems, deal, the one with evangelicalism, Roman Catholicism, and rationalism; the other with the essentials of Christian faith and practice. With these may be joined the later *La Saisiaz*, inspired by the death of the poet's friend Miss A. E. Smith, and setting forth his faith in God and immortality.

The Ring and the Book is a gigantic poem in upwards of 20,000 lines, based on an Italian murder case of the 16th century. Book I. contains an account of the origin of the poem and an outline of the sordid story; Book XII. is Browning's summary and conclusion; the intervening ten books are monologues of the chief actors, three representative outsiders (giving various points of view), the two lawyers, and the Pope, to whom the fate of the murderers was finally referred. The poem is remarkable for its dramatic power and variety, but still more for its inexhaustible humanity and for a sustained psychological insight which has perhaps never been equalled in poetry.

LATER POEMS.—*Balaustion's Adventure* is founded on an incident recorded by Plutarch, and incorporates a "transcript" of Euripides' *Alcestis*. *Aristophanes' Apology*, a sequel to the foregoing, introduces another "transcript" from Euripides —*Heracles*. The *Apology* is a defence from the point of view of its great master of the principles of old Greek comedy. *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* is a study, in the form of a dramatic monologue, of the character and career of Napoleon III.; *Fifine at the Fair*, an inquiry into the relations of men and women and inconstancy in love, in which truth and casuistry are mixed to the point of bewilderment. *Red Cotton Night-cap Country* and *The Inn Album* are melodramatic tales of modern life. In *Pacchiarotto, etc.*, the title-piece reads like a parody of Browning at his worst, and the poet's attack in it on his critics is not very dignified or effective. But some of the minor poems (*At the Mermaid, Hervé Riel, etc.*) suffice to redeem

[1] Prefatory Note to *Dramatic Lyrics*; cf. *One Word More* in *Men and Women*.

the collection. *The Two Poets of Croisic* is a narrative poem: at the conclusion Browning proposes happiness as the final test of poetic merit. *Dramatic Idylls* and *Jocoseria* return to the admirable method of *Men and Women* and *Dramatic Romances*. *Ferishtah's Fancies*, a dozen fables ascribed to the dervish Ferishtah, express Browning's views on various religious and moral questions treated elsewhere in his works. Each fable is followed by a lyric, translating its lesson into more emotional terms. In *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day*, a series of character studies, instead of merging himself in the persons introduced, Browning stands apart and criticizes them. *Asolando*, a final miscellany, is noteworthy for the superb "Epilogue." It contains an appropriate summing up of the poet's optimistic faith.

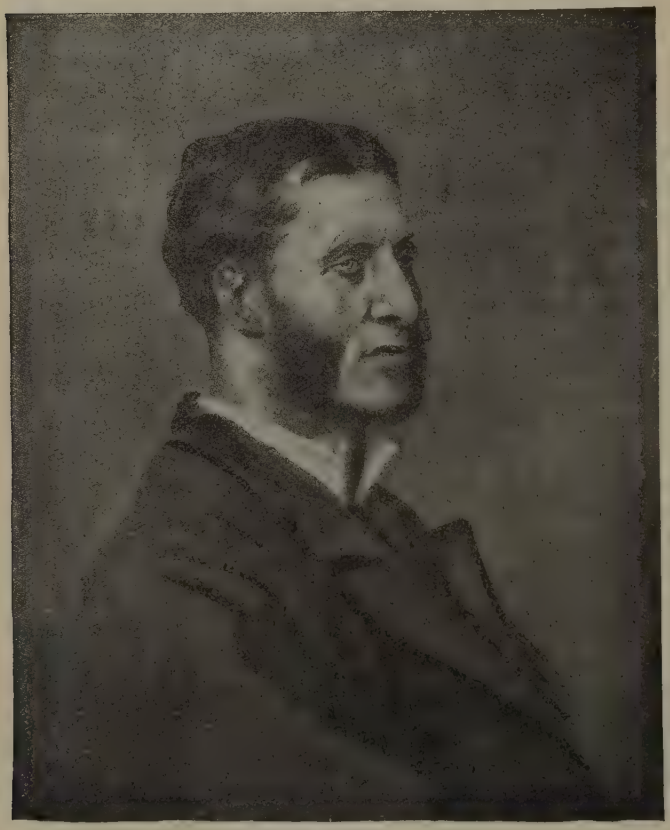
Characteristics.—The range of Browning's work is enormous and his catholicity astonishing, yet he worked within a circle of ideas, and his philosophy of life was compounded of a few great truths which, from *Pauline* to *Asolando*, he repeated again and again in all sorts of different forms. He has been called the poet of man. It would be more correct to describe him as the poet of men, for his interest in humanity was at bottom an interest in individuality, and in individuality as far as possible removed from the common type. His genius was essentially dramatic; but as his attention was always fixed, not on action but on the forces and conflicts of the inner life, he felt himself encumbered by the machinery of the regular drama, and found his chief channel of expression in the dramatic monologue. Many of his poems in this characteristic form are masterpieces of psychological insight and analytical power. Yet even in the most perfect of them Browning is seldom completely dramatic; his men and women all speak with his peculiar accent, and they are made whether directly (e.g., *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Abt Vogler*) or as unwilling witnesses (e.g., *Karshish*, *Cleon*, *The Bishop orders his Tomb*) to afford confirmation of his personal views. Of the matter, tone, and bearing of his work enough has been said; from the beginning to the end of his long career, he proclaimed God, immortality, and the goodness of things; and if, as at first seems curious, he dwelt persistently upon the ugliness and evil of the world, he did so that he might prove that even when life is taken at its worst, the grounds of faith remain unshaken. His style has been the subject of endless controversy, in regard to which it is necessary only to say that he is in fact often difficult and at times obscure, and that while he has many mannerisms—verbal tricks and antics, cacophonies of expression, and outrageous rhymes—he often shows himself an artist of supreme excellence and a singer of rare grace and charm.

After a long period of uncritical neglect, Browning became the subject of a cult equally uncritical, and as a result impartial judgment was for a time almost impossible. The sifting process is, however, already at work, and it now seems clear that, while much of his voluminous writings will be allowed to fall into oblivion, what remains will take its place among the permanent treasures of modern literature. His form is the true expression of a character which, though rugged and impetuous,

is marked by an extraordinary intensity and sincerity both of feeling and thought. While life is a fight and a carnival Browning will always be in it "sublimating passion and creating truth."

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–88)

Life and Character. — Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham, Middlesex, on December 24, 1822, and was educated at Winchester, Rugby, and Oxford. In 1847 he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1851 was appointed to an inspectorship of schools, which he held till 1885. From 1857 to 1867 he was professor of poetry at Oxford. He lectured in America in 1883 and 1886. He died on April 15, 1888. Arnold long figured in popular imagination as a "superior person," a dilettante apostle of "culture," and an "elegant and spurious Jeremiah," who was not to be taken too seriously. Certain mannerisms of his prose writings were, in part at least, responsible for this legendary perversion of his personality. He was in fact an earnest, sincere, hard-working, and thoroughly sympathetic man.



Matthew Arnold.

Works.—His publications in verse are: *The Strayed Reveller* (1849); *Empedocles on Etna* (1852); *Poems* (1853); *Poems*, second series (1855); *Merope* (1858); *New Poems* (1867). (For Arnold's prose works, see p. 533.)

Views.—In his general conception of poetry the ethical element was in the

ascendant. For a poet to be great it is necessary that he shall handle "sound subject matter" in a spirit of "high seriousness." Poetry is "a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty."[1] "The greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life—to the question: How to live."[2] At this point the connection between Arnold's theory and practice is very clear. Not so when we turn to his doctrine of the essential superiority of impersonal poetry to personal. Bred in the school of the Greeks, he held that all really great poetry is poetry in which, as in epic and drama, the poet goes out of himself. He also argued that, in order that the poet should get as far away from himself as possible, the subject should be chosen out of the past:

> The Greeks no doubt felt . . . that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem.—*Preface to Poems*, 1853.

The natural bias of Arnold's genius was too strong for these theories, however, and the subjective element is to be noted in all his most vital work.

Poems.—*Narrative and Dramatic Poems* are written in accordance with the doctrine of objective art. The finest of the narratives is *Sohrab and Rustum*, which is fashioned closely on the Homeric model. *Balder Dead*, from the Edda, is another "Homeric echo." Despite the theoretic impersonality there is in the character of Balder more than a hint of the poet himself. *Tristram and Iseult*, which borrows from the Arthurian legend cycle, is rather a series of dramatic lyrics than a regular narrative, and is instructive as showing Arnold's inability to deal with intense passion. Of his two experiments in the drama, *Empedocles on Etna* is by far the more interesting, and this in part because the personal element encroaches strongly upon the dramatic. *Merope* is a tragedy on strictly classical lines, and, notwithstanding its technical perfection as an imitation, it serves to point the futility of such elaborate reproductions of dead forms. These impersonal poems are carefully wrought and contain passages of great beauty, but they are formal, stiff, and academic. His genius, as has been said, was not epic or dramatic; it was introspective, and his true field therefore lay in the lyric.

Personal Poetry.—This is marked by a fine combination of sincerity and restraint. As he wrote of Sénancour's *Obermann:*

> A fever in these pages burns
> Beneath the calm they feign.

In Arnold's case the fever was bred of his own spiritual struggles and deep realization of the religious upheaval of his age. He felt himself

> Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born;

[1] *The Study of Poetry.* [2] *Essay on Wordsworth.*

and while his manly sense prevented him from taking refuge in a return to the past, he saw little in the present to encourage him. Yet his mood varies from the utter dejection of *Dover Beach* to the comparative hopefulness of *The Future*. On the whole he grew less pessimistic with advancing life, as we may see by comparing the two *Obermann* poems, separated in composition by eighteen years. An important division of his personal poetry is that which comprises his elegies. It is characteristic of him that he should be "at his best in the mood of lament"—as in *Thyrsis*, a monody on the death of Clough, and *Rugby Chapel*, in memory of his father. His elegiac poetry never confines itself to a simple expression of sorrow; it invariably becomes reflective and philosophical. At times the directly critical element is uppermost, as in *Memorial Verses* (1850) and *Heine's Grave*, which are connecting links between Arnold's work in verse and his work in prose.

Characteristics.—Arnold's poetry has in a high degree the classic qualities of poise, temperance, and reserve. Careful workmanship and purity and dignity of style are among its prominent technical features. Though his ear was not perfect, his lyrical measures are generally satisfying, while his blank verse has a stately movement of its own. His moral spirit is always noble, and his fine stoicism prevents his melancholy from becoming debilitating. But his austerity and apparent coldness, and his want of "joyful and bounding emotion," have stood in the way of his popularity, and he is still a master for the cultured few.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819–61)

Life and Character.—Arthur Hugh Clough was born in Liverpool on January 1, 1819, and was educated at Rugby and Oxford. Compelled by religious scruples to resign his tutorship and fellowship, and failing to find a congenial opening in England, he emigrated to America, where he lived for a year by writing and teaching. In 1853, on the offer of a post in the Education Office, he returned home, and in 1854 he married. After a few years of happy domestic life, his health gave way; he vainly sought restoration in travel, and died at Florence, November 13, 1861. Clough was a man of beautiful character, intellectually fearless and honest, and a sincere seeker after truth. It is enough to say of him that he fully merited his friend Arnold's noble tribute in *Thyrsis*.

Works.—*The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848); *Ambarvalia* (1849); *Amours de Voyage* (written 1849; published 1858); *Dipsychus* (posthumous); *Mari Magno* (posthumous).

Views.—Amid all the religious disturbances of his life, Clough repudiated altogether the mental jugglery by which men continually attempt for their own comfort to make fact fit in with preconceived notions or inherited beliefs. We must "look

straight out at things"[1] and take the consequences: "let fact be fact, and life the thing it can."[2] This "austere love of truth" dominated all his thought. In regard to poetry he maintained that, if the poet is to hold his ground with modern readers against the novelist, he must abandon mythology and deal with subjects which have a living meaning for the world of to-day.[3] He himself had little interest in poetry "that did not touch some deep question, some vital feeling in human nature."[4]

Poems.—*The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* is a delightful love story, touched with pleasant humour, and written in hexameters of the *Evangeline* type. *Amours de Voyage* is another serio-comic love story, also in hexameters. In the character of Claude, the unheroic hero, Clough exhibits that "over-educated weakness of purpose" which, he held, was likely to result from the introspective tendencies of modern culture. *Dipsychus* (unfinished), a latter-day, unromantic *Faust*, presents a study of idealism in its daily conflict with the power of the world. Clough's minor poems are almost entirely concerned with his religious doubts and cravings and moral convictions. Some of his lyrics, like *Qua Cursum Ventus* and *Say not the struggle nought availeth*, are of great excellence.

Characteristics.—Clough's poetry is rather intellectual than imaginative or passionate. Furthermore, it is almost entirely a poetry of self-analysis and self-delineation, expressing with convincing sincerity the writer's spiritual unrest, his resolute facing of fact, his single-hearted devotion to truth. Yet while thus pre-eminently subjective, Clough, like Arnold, was also the mouthpiece of his generation, whence his importance in the religious and literary history of the time.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806–61)

Life and Character.—Elizabeth Barrett was born at Coxhoe Hall, near Durham, on March 6, 1806. Her health was poor, and for many years she lived the secluded life of an invalid, devoting herself to study and composition. Her marriage with Robert Browning, in defiance of the wishes of her father, took place in 1846, and she died in Florence in 1861. The severe discipline of suffering and sorrow served only to ennoble her character and enlarge her sympathies; she was, as Hawthorne said, "sweetly disposed towards the human race, though only remotely akin to it."[5]

Works.—Her principal publications are: *The Battle of Marathon* (1820); *An Essay on Mind* (1826); *The Seraphim, and other Poems* (1838); *Poems* (1844 and 1850);

[1] Letter, March 9, 1853.
[2] *Dipsychus*, II.
[3] *Review of some Poems, by A. Smith and M. Arnold*, in *Prose Remains*.
[4] *Memoir* prefixed to *Prose Remains*.
[5] *Italian Notebooks*, p. 11.

Casa Guidi Windows (1851); *Aurora Leigh* (1856); *Poems before Congress* (1860); *Last Poems* (1862).

Views.—In religion Mrs. Browning was a devout Christian; in politics, a strong Liberal, though, like her husband, she had a horror of Socialism. The essence of art for her was its power of perceiving the ideal in the real, the divine in the natural;

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes (*Aurora Leigh*, VII.);

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

and such an one is the true artist.

> Art's the witness of what Is,
> Behind this show (*Ibid.*);

and if in any age men fail to realize the heroic quality of the life about them, the fault is with them and not with their time. In diametrical opposition to Arnold she held, therefore, that it is part of the poet's mission to deal freely with contemporary facts and problems.[1]

Poems. — NARRATIVE POEMS. — *Aurora Leigh*, Mrs. Browning's most ambitious effort, is virtually a modern sociological novel in nine books of fluent blank verse. It sets forth her "highest conceptions upon Life and Art."[2] *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, another "romance of the age," tells of the love of a high-born lady for a humble poet. Its sentiment, though much in the taste of the time, now seems a little cheap. The romantic poems, *Rhyme of the Duchess May*, *Lay of the Brown Rosary*, *Romaunt of Margret*, etc., are vigorous and picturesque, but gushing and overwrought.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POEMS.—*The Cry of the Children* is the finest expression of Mrs. Browning's humanitarianism, and has its place beside Hood's *Song of the Shirt*. *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Poems before Congress* show her passionate sympathy with the cause of Italian independence.

RELIGIOUS POEMS.—*The Seraphim*, "a diffuse, mystical passion-play,"[3] and *A Drama of Exile*, describing "the new and strange experiences of the fallen humanity . . . with a peculiar reference to Eve's allotted grief,"[4] are of little

[1] *Aurora Leigh*, V. [2] Dedication. [3] Stedman. [4] Preface.

value. Many of the minor religious poems, on the other hand (e.g., *He giveth His Beloved Sleep*, *Cowper's Grave*), have great tenderness and beauty.

PERSONAL POEMS.—The chief of these are the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which take rank among the finest love-poems in our literature.

Characteristics.—Mrs. Browning's faults are numerous and glaring. Wholly wanting in self-restraint, she allows her feminine emotion to run away with her, and is often extravagant and at times hysterical. Her unchecked fluency degenerates into volubility, and there are very few of her poems which do not suffer from prolixity and dilution. Her poetic vocabulary is full of affectations, and in her metre and rhymes she is both careless and perverse. But against these defects many sterling qualities have to be set down. She was a woman of real genius; her work is pervaded by a noble sincerity and a large and generous human feeling; she has passion, imagination, and power; and the melody of her verse at its best is new and beautiful.

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Chapter 6. VICTORIAN NOVELISTS

New Developments in the Novel: Realism and Romanticism, Influence of Science, Awakening of the Social Consciousness, the New Psychology and the Deeper Reading of Life—Dickens: Delineation of the Humbler Classes, his Creative Imagination—Thackeray's Novels: a Reaction against the Romantic Movement—The Brontë sisters: Passion and Spiritual Ideas in the Novel—Historical and Miscellaneous Novelists: Disraeli, Lever, Lytton, the Kingsleys, Charles Reade, Trollope, etc.—Philosophical Realism: Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot

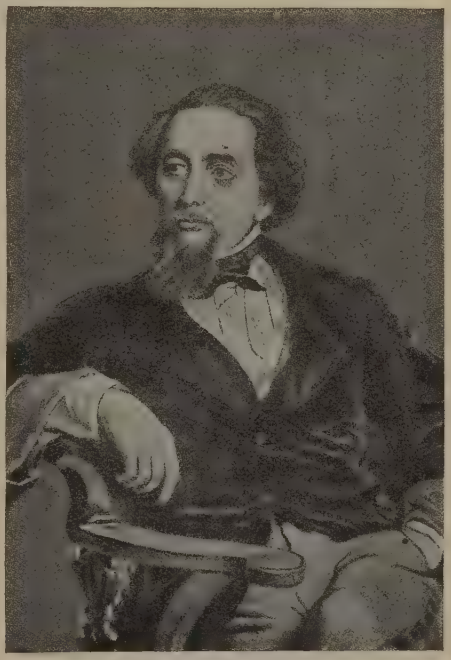
The history of the 18th-century novel really closes with Thackeray, who aspired to be another Fielding, and protested against the ideals of the Romantic Movement. The influence of that movement shows itself most unmistakably in the Brontë sisters, whose novels and poems were dominated by a Wordsworthian feeling for nature, a frank consciousness of passion, and a sense of the deeper things that make the poetry of life. The Brontës form a link between the older realists and the fiction of Hardy and Meredith, which has affiliation with poetry. Dickens had shown some tendencies in the same direction. With Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot the novel becomes thoroughly realistic again in method, and in intention more and more philosophical. Both wrote as moralists; and George Eliot's diagnosis of life was deepened by the half-a-lifetime of study she had given to modern psychology, metaphysics, and ethics, before she began to write fiction.

In these novelists we see the influences at work that had affected poetry in the previous half-century. We also see a general awakening of the social consciousness. Characters from the lower classes had hitherto been introduced for the sake of picturesqueness or comic effect; they now became the central figures of the story. Finally, in the latter part of the 19th century the development of science began to react powerfully on fiction.

CHARLES DICKENS (1812–70)

Life.—Charles Dickens belonged to the needy lower middle-class which forms the subject of most of his novels. Born at Portsea, he spent his boyhood at Chatham, and then at Camden Town. His father was a Government clerk in poor circumstances, who was unable to give him much in the way of education, and fell into monetary difficulties, which resulted in the lad's being sent to work in a blacking warehouse at Hungerford Stairs. Dickens, however, got two more years' schooling before he had to start life in earnest. His father was now a parliamentary reporter; Dickens taught himself shorthand, and obtained a similar post. As a member of the reporting staff of the *Morning Chronicle*, he supplemented his regular journalism by contributing sketches of life to this and other papers. These were collected and published in two series as *Sketches by Boz* (1835–6).

Works.—The *Pickwick Papers*, or *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1837), belongs to the facetious genre of random rollicking adventure about town with which Pierce Egan and Theodore Hook had amused readers in the previous decade. It was meant to be the text to a series of comic plates by Seymour; but the artist died, and the story took precedence of the illustrations, which were now executed by Hablot Browne, better known as "Phiz." Its success was beyond all precedent, and Dickens remained until his death the most popular and famous of English writers. *Oliver Twist* appeared in *Bentley's Miscellany* (1837–9), followed by *Nicholas Nickleby* in monthly numbers (1838–9). *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–1) and an historical novel, *Barnaby Rudge* (1840–1), also appeared serially. In 1842 Dickens went to America, and some results of his visit appear in the next novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844). He wrote *The Chimes*, which, with *A Christmas Carol* and other fantasies, are now collected as *Christmas Books* (1843–8), at Genoa. He was the first editor of the *Daily News* (1846), but resigned almost immediately. He had early cherished a desire to go on the stage, and now ran a series of amateur performances of Shakespeare's, Jonson's, and other plays, as actor-manager, in the provinces and afterwards in London. He started *Household Words* in 1849, and on its cessation in 1859 started *All the Year Round*.



Charles Dickens.
(From the painting by W. P. Frith, R.A.)

His other novels include *Dombey and Son* (1848); *David Copperfield* (1850); *Bleak House* (1853); *Hard Times* (1854); *Little Dorrit* (1857); another historical novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), inspired by Carlyle's *French Revolution*; *Great Expectations* (1861); *Our Mutual Friend* (1865); and the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). Dickens separated from his wife in 1858. That year he started a series of public readings, which proved successful and lucrative, and took him to Paris and to America. The exertion hastened his death, which took place suddenly in 1870.

Characteristics: his Realism.—Dickens was a realist only in a limited sense. His mind was packed with the experiences of a trained reporter, and in his own realm—a sufficiently wide one, since he appeared to know everything except the

higher classes, which were Thackeray's particular domain—he has always been unrivalled. So far as the external features of manners, surroundings, and the particularities of different classes go, especially in the humbler walks of life, he was not only omniscient but extremely faithful. His pictures are crammed with the rich detail gathered by an untiring observer. Nothing seems to have escaped his eye; nothing was beneath his sympathy and his affection.

His Idealism. — But Dickens's genius was essentially creative, humorous, and fantastic. He was an idealist and a dreamer of poetic dreams. What he had observed of human nature served him as raw material. His sleepless imagination exaggerated the comic side of everything, and developed the suggestions of reality into humorous idealisms far transcending the proportions of ordinary life. Even in *Sketches by Boz* the extravagance is something different from ordinary farce. The figures appearing in the next two novels likewise belong to an order quite distinct from caricature. Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, Mr. Bumble, Fagin, the Artful Dodger, and Charlie Bates are, in their several ways, creatures of poetry, and, with many of Dickens's later characters, have taken a permanent place in our minds as types representing the transcendence of certain traits. We are familiar with their idiosyncrasies and even their outward features—and that not merely through the efforts of Dickens's brilliant illustrators—more familiar even than with the most famous of Shakespeare's characters. If we would name a type of the brutal murderer, it is not Charles Peace or Jack the Ripper that would first come to mind, but Bill Sikes. Similarly, we sort hypocrites by reference to those finely differenced examples, Pecksniff, Mr. Chadband, and Uriah Heep. This creative faculty seems inexhaustible. There are said to be over three hundred and fifty characters in the *Pickwick Papers*, and about sixty distinct situations. *David Copperfield*, again, is richer in personal experience than the work of any other novelist, but differs from the rest of his novels only in the extent, not the essential importance, of this element.

His Sentimentalism.—Dickens's imaginative sympathy gave a rare tenderness and a compassionate insight to his drawing of poor human creatures; his idealism tended to dwell on the beauty of human pathos, and to evolve sentimental types akin in imaginative scope to his humorous creations. Sentimentalism is revolting to modern tastes; but Dickens's and Thackeray's readers relished it with as much zest as did the readers of Richardson, Sterne, and, presumably, Mackenzie. We must be forgiven for finding Little Nell and her grandfather, in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, tiresome and oppressive, and seeing too much artifice even in the moving scene of the death of Paul Dombey. We have now been brought into too real a consciousness of the miseries of existence to bear such deliberate "piling up of the agony." But we owe not a little to Dickens for arousing this very sense of fellowship, even with the meanest and commonest, who had hitherto served art merely as foils to the more stalwart and comely.

His Style.—Dickens's idealizing imagination has its effect on his style. He is much more of a poet in his prose fiction than Scott showed himself in the Waverley Novels. Dickens had no more patience with the romanticism of Scott and his imitators than Thackeray had. He is constantly girding at the survivals of feudalism and mediæval ignorance and barbarity to which he traced many of the ills of society. The poetry in Dickens's novels is the Wordsworthian poetry of common life. It is expressed, not only in the beauty of homeliness and the grandeur of suffering and self-sacrifice, but in the subjective nature of his style. This is the reverse of impersonal. He allowed himself a semi-lyrical freedom in expressing feeling. His most ordinary prose is emotional. Imaginative rhapsodies like the *Christmas Carol* almost cry out for the restraints of metre. On the other hand, in moments of intense drama, he uses poetic figures with concentrated power and impressiveness. It throws light on the poetic nature of such a human grotesque as Mrs. Gamp to note that her patter glides into fragmentary blank verse.

> "There are some happy creeturs," Mrs. Gamp observed, "as time runs back'ards with, and you are one, Mrs. Mould; not that he need do nothing except use you in the most owldacious way for years to come, I'm sure; for young you are and will be. I says to Mrs. Harris," Mrs. Gamp continued, "only t'other day; the last Monday evening fortnight as ever dawned upon this Piljian's Projiss of a mortal wale; I says to Mrs. Harris when she says to me, 'Years and our trials, Mrs. Gamp, sets marks upon us all,'—'Say not the words, Mrs. Harris, if you and me is to be continual friends, for sech is not the case. Mrs. Mould,' I says, making so free, I will confess, as use the name," (she curtseyed here,) "'is one of them that goes agen the obserwation straight; and never, Mrs. Harris, whilsts I've a drop of breath to draw, will I set by, and not stand up, don't think it.'—'I ast your pardon, ma'am,' says Mrs. Harris, 'and I humbly grant your grace; for if ever a woman lived as would see her feller creeturs into fits to serve her friends, well do I know that woman's name is Sairey Gamp.'"

Early Novels.—The *Pickwick Papers* exhibits Dickens at his most characteristic with the fewest drawbacks. His imagination freshly stored with human material collected in his early experiences in the streets of London, he worked up the fanciful idea of an eccentric club dispatching four members on a journey of research through town and the home counties. The incidents are farcical, and excellent farce they make; but they depend for their full effect on the characters—the immortal Pickwick, Sam Weller and his father, the fat boy, Mrs. Bardell, Mr. Jingle, and a large number hardly their inferiors in mirthful qualities. *Oliver Twist* relates the fortunes of a workhouse boy, and gives a picture of the criminal classes such as to confound Bulwer Lytton's sentimental versions in *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*. *Nicholas Nickleby* has a plot hingeing on the antagonism of the good Nicholas and his bad uncle, the usurious Ralph Nickleby. But the strength of the book is in the numerous comic characters and absurd situations, the Mantalinis, the Cheerybles, Mr. Vincent Crummles, the Squeers family and their detestable school, Dotheboys Hall, where Dickens, as in *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist*, comes forward as the social reformer. *The Old Curiosity Shop* is redeemed from mere mawkishness by its comic chapters and sportive creations like Kit Nubbles, Dick Swiveller, and the Marchioness. Here also a grimmer and more grotesque humour is embodied in the diabolical Quilp.

Historical Novels.—*Barnaby Rudge* gave a lurid tableau of the No Popery riots of 1780. More purely Dickensian was the non-historical part of the story, enlivened by the Vardens, the Willets, Miss Miggs, and Sim Tappertit. Nearly twenty years later, Dickens, inspired by Carlyle, wrote a novel of the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities*, an impressive melodrama culminating in the famous scene of Sydney Carton's self-immolation at the guillotine.

"Martin Chuzzlewit," "David Copperfield," etc.—*Martin Chuzzlewit* stands for Dickens's high-water mark in his singular power of creating character. It comprises such epitomes of humanity's foibles as Mr. Pecksniff, Mark Tapley, Tom Pinch, Mrs. Todgers, the Hon. Elijah Pogram, Betsey Prig, and above all the ineffable midwife, Sairey Gamp. In *Dombey and Son* the pathos is relieved by the humours of Mrs. Chick and Miss Tox, the Toodles family, Mrs. Pipchin, Dr. Blimber, Captain Cuttle, Mrs. MacStinger, and Mr. Toots. *David Copperfield* is largely autobiographical. Dickens's early struggles are pathetically reflected in the hero's hard youth; and many other memories recur, Mr. Micawber himself being, according to some, a highly Dickensian portrayal of his father. Other characters of the same imaginative order are Miss Betsey Trotwood, Mr. Dick, Barkis, the Peggottys, Tommy Traddles, and the sanctimonious Uriah Heep. *David Copperfield* is better constructed than the majority of Dickens's novels, which were put together in the haphazard way practised by the numerous writers of serial novels in the halcyon days of the magazine story. In *Bleak House* the humorous chronicle of an interminable lawsuit is an example of his amusing but not always effective satire on current abuses. The characters comprise such typical creations as the hero, Carstone, Poor Jo, Mr. Turveydrop, Mrs. Jellyby the philanthropist, Guppy, and the Bagnets, and two unfair caricatures, Boythorn and Harold Skimpole, of Landor and Leigh Hunt respectively.

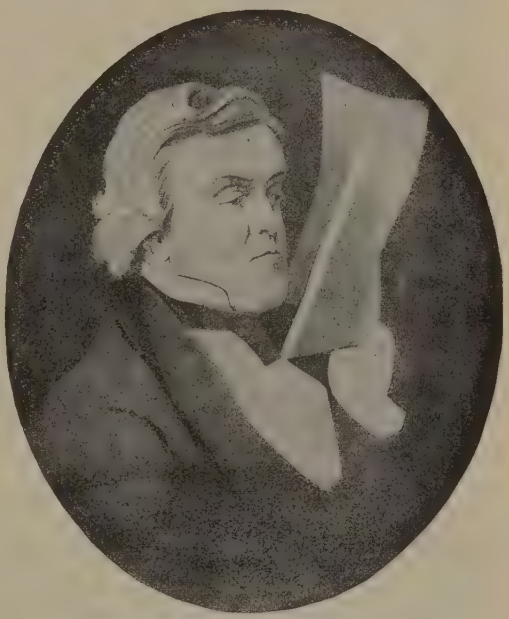
Dickens's Grave, Westminster Abbey.
(Photo by Spooner.)

Later Novels.—In *Hard Times* Dickens took up the cause preached by Carlyle, and drew a repulsive picture of modern political economy and industrial progress in a hideous manufacturing town run by two apostles of fact, Gradgrind and Bounderby. In *Little Dorrit* he satirized the cumbrous routine of the Civil Service, under the

style of the Circumlocution Office. *Great Expectations* is a charming story with the Thames marshes as background. Joe Gargery and Miss Havisham belong to the finest strain of Dickensian creations, and so do Boffin and Wegg, in *Our Mutual Friend*. *Edwin Drood* also contains some promising characters, and the melodramatic fascinations of the plot have lured many ingenious minds to try to unravel the mystery of Drood's disappearance.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–63)

Thackeray was the son of an Anglo-Indian, and was born at Calcutta. He came to England in 1817, was educated at Charterhouse and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and afterwards supplemented his education with foreign travel, visiting Goethe at Weimar. He tried various professions—law, journalism, art—till loss of means compelled him at last to follow up journalism with more perseverance. By contributions to *Fraser's Magazine*, the *Times*, the *Westminster Review*, *Punch*, and other periodicals, he gradually won a place for himself in literature, and popularity and an ample income came with the publication of *The Book of Snobs* and *Vanity Fair* in 1848. Like Dickens, Thackeray lectured in England and America. He was the first editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, one of the most brilliant successes in periodical light literature. He died in 1863 at the age of fifty-two.



William Makepeace Thackeray.
(From the painting by Samuel Laurence.)

Works.—The best of many miscellaneous works written while Thackeray was feeling his way to the true sphere of his genius was *The Yellowplush Correspondence* (1838), ultimately incorporated in *The Memoirs of Mr. C. J. Yellowplush, sometime Footman in Many Genteel Families*. His Paris and Irish *Sketch-books* contain some admirable writing. *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844) was a masterpiece in the ironic genre inaugurated by Fielding's *Jonathan Wild the Great*. None of these, however, brought Thackeray the unmistakable success he craved. *Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* (not issued as a book till 1849) came to a premature end in the magazine where it began as a serial. The tide turned

with *The Book of Snobs*, collected from the pages of *Punch*, and *Vanity Fair* (1848). *Pendennis* appeared in two volumes in 1849–50, *Esmond* in 1852, and *The Newcomes* in 1854–5. *The Virginians*, a sequel to *Esmond*, appeared in 1858–9. *The Adventures of Philip* (1862), *Catherine* (1867–8), a weaker essay in the Lyndon style, and two fragments, *Denis Duval* (1867) and a mediæval romance (1911), were his last works.

Characteristics.—Thackeray was in the main a reactionary against the Romantic movement, and a scoffer at the attractive pictures of mediæval chivalry and heroism put forward by Scott and his imitators. Like Fielding, he began by satire and burlesque of his contemporaries, parodying the sentimental affectations and pretentiousness of Lytton, the Gothic proclivities of Harrison Ainsworth, G. P. R. James's stilted dullness, and what he thought the flashy brilliance of Disraeli. He was by training and disposition a child of the Augustan age. He shows no acquaintance with any of the poets who led the Romantic movement, except Scott and Byron, whose departures from 18th-century tradition he ridiculed. But he was deeply read in Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, Swift, and Fielding; and, though he interpreted them somewhat mistakenly in his *English Humorists* (1853), he was with them in sympathy, and learned in their school his clear, urbane, and unpretentious style.

Artistic Methods.—With his zeal for common sense and quick eye for the absurdities of life, he naturally adopted Fielding's theory of the novel. Jane Austen's delicate art was beyond him. Nothing could induce Thackeray to suppress himself. He was determined to state his views in person.

> And, as we bring our characters forward, I will ask leave, as a man and a brother, not only to introduce them, but occasionally to step down from the platform, and talk about them.
> *Vanity Fair.*

He would defend this practice by appealing to Fielding's reflective discourses, and claiming that the novelist is a critical expounder of life. He was not only an inheritor of 18th-century traditions, modes of thought, and views of life and art, but a literary kinsman of Fielding, whom he avowedly took as his model in *Barry Lyndon* and *Pendennis*. Without Fielding's intellectual grip and freedom from sentimentality, Thackeray was his equal as a humorist; and in technique, in the use of dialogue, and in the art of making the story seem to tell itself, he was his superior. But for his inability to make the novel a piece of shapely architecture, and for the jarring effect of his moral and sentimental reflections, in season and out of season, his workmanship would put him at the head of English novelists.

His finest characters were real people to Thackeray, with a life all their own. "How the dickens did he come to think of that," he exclaims of one. "I don't control my characters, I am in their hands, and they take me where they please." In this sub-conscious working of the mind Thackeray's genius was like that of Scott

and Dickens. We may object that he ought to have controlled his characters, howsoever free they might appear from outward constraint. Obviously, the intellectual realist throws up the game when he lets the factors of his problem escape him.

Views.—Thackeray was without that hard intelligence, free from the aberrations of feeling, which pursues its scrutiny with unfailing logic and fearless truth. His only philosophy was a worldly common sense and a feeling for the decency of things, a vague trust in goodness and a rooted belief in the inherent badness of the great majority, which drove him to paint a one-sided picture as a warning of our desperate condition. His intention in *Vanity Fair* was to show "a set of people living without God in the world." But he uses the phrase only in a conventional sense: the central problem did not excite any interest in Thackeray. His perfunctory attitude towards religion was typical of his limitations. He had no sense of the beauty of nature or the significance of art. His psychology was no deeper than his philosophy, and though he aimed higher, he must be judged as one of the most accomplished of our novelists of manners.

Early Works.—*The Yellowplush Papers* are a racy character-study of the footman of "Buckley Square," and contain many sharp hits at Lytton's foppish Pelhams, gentlemen-highwaymen like Paul Clifford, and blameless murderers like Eugene Aram. Here is a magnificent portrait of the Honourable Mr. Deuceace, one of Jeames's masters:

> If he had been a common man, you'd have said he was no better than a swinler. It's only rank and buth that can warrant such singularities as my master show'd. For it's no use disgysing it—the Honrabble Halgernon was a GAMBLER. For a man of wulgar family, it's the wust trade that can be—for a man of common feelinx of honesty, this profession is quite imposbil; but for a real thoroughbread genlum, it's the esiest and most prophetable line he can take.

Lytton's fulsome rhetoric and Byronic sentiment was one of his standing butts, and is parodied again in *Novels by Eminent Hands*. The most elaborate burlesque was *Rebecca and Rowena*, in which he re-writes *Ivanhoe*, with the Jewess for heroine instead of the insipid Rowena. But the most telling exposure of false ideals and the nonsense of romance was *Barry Lyndon*, a fine work of sustained irony, though not sustained with the same hard intellectual consistency as Fielding put into *Jonathan Wild*. It is the autobiography of a thorough-paced scoundrel, whose swaggering Irish conceit betrays his real baseness in every sentence. The story of this rascal's exploits, defeats, and successes is absorbing from start to finish. It would be interesting to know what Thackeray would have made of his own projected mediæval romance. From the fragment published in the *Cornhill* in 1911 he was apparently making a 15th-century Pendennis, with scenery from Philip de Commines.

The Book of Snobs, a collection of humorous monographs on the species, is remark-

able for its curious bitterness against the British vice it satirizes, a feeling that permeates all Thackeray's novels.

"Vanity Fair."—The first of his four great novels was *Vanity Fair*, a crowded picture of society in Waterloo days and after, and the epic of a brilliant adventuress, Becky Sharp. This nefarious but captivating woman is deliberately placed in relief against the sweet and tender but exasperating Amelia, "a silly little thing," as Thackeray himself calls her in a letter. Amelia marries the worthless George Osborne, and when he is shot at Waterloo, after secretly philandering with Becky, swears to be true to his memory, though the estimable but ungainly Dobbin courts and befriends her when she richly deserves to be left to her misfortunes. The book does not end until this unromantic love-affair is settled: it might well have ended with Becky Sharp's downfall. This young lady, without a friend but her own wits, all but marries a baronet, does become the wife of his son, and runs a course of dazzling social success, based on nothing but debts and effrontery, till the inevitable collapse, when she retires to queen it in shadier spheres on the Continent. She has a free and generous spirit, which fascinates the reader as much as her tact and wit subjugated her admirers. Her husband, the devil-may-care guardsman, Rawdon Crawley, is a masterpiece of realistic drawing.

"Pendennis."—From the task of painting a social world in its entirety Thackeray turned in *Pendennis* to a different object, to relate the life of a young man, "his fortunes and misfortunes, his friends and his greatest enemy," which was of course the young man himself. *Pendennis* was an attempt to rival *Tom Jones*, and must be judged by a high standard. Its hero is, undisguisedly, a self-reflection of Thackeray. But Thackeray pleads that, though Fielding could "depict to his utmost power a man," frankness had now become impossible. "Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art." Hence he grew timid and reticent when he was called upon to show "a young man resisting and affected by temptation." He held that art could not touch the nude without imperilling morality, and that if he drew a young man having appetites and passions it was necessary "to drape him."

But if he failed in the comedy of character, Thackeray was abundantly successful in the comedy of manners. Many of the other characters, those whom he said he did not control, are magnificent. That delightful worldling and most engaging of snobs, Major Pendennis, is Thackeray's most finished study of that favourite genus. Some others are creatures of farce and caricature, like Captain Costigan, the literary retinue of the publisher Bungay, and the enamoured chef, Monsieur Mirobolant; but many belong to the highest order of comedy. As a study of sham sentiment Blanche Amory is unmatched.

> "Eh! Il me faut des émotions," said Blanche. . . . But this young lady was not able to carry out any emotion to the full, but had a sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, and a sham grief, each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave place to the next sham emotion.

"Esmond."—One alone of Thackeray's novels was completed by its author before the printer began his work. This explains why the other novels are excellent in their parts, while *Esmond* is perfect in structure and homogeneous in workmanship. *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.*, purports to be an autobiography written early in the reign of George III. Its style, derived from Thackeray's most cherished models, gives the contemporary flavour and atmosphere without pedantry or affectation. Thackeray knew the period as familiarly as he knew his own, and the story goes as smoothly as those pertaining to his own day. Henry Esmond, like other faultless heroes, interests us little in himself. But the figure of Beatrix is one of Thackeray's great creations, and supplemented by the later figure of the Baroness de Bernstein, in *The Virginians*—Beatrix in her unbeautiful old age—forms perhaps the most extended study of a woman in English literature. Esmond's story is engrossing and moving enough, with the secret of his true birth, the nobility of his renunciation of ancestral honours for the child of his beloved lady, and the fine sentiment of that love conquering the early passion for Beatrix. Dramatic episodes like the duel with Lord Mohun, and scenes of the finest comedy, in several of which historical personages like Marlborough, General Webb, and the Old Pretender appear, place this in the first rank of historical novels.

"The Newcomes."—Thackeray returned in *The Newcomes*, that "great middle-class epic," the tragi-comedy of worldliness, to the theme of *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*. In the different branches of the Newcome family during two generations, he shows the impact of character upon character, the moral influences at work in a certain social environment, the subtle changes of affection, the growth of hatred, and the steady modification of a large group of characters immersed in this infinitely complex world; and he does it admirably. But he was too zealous a preacher to be impartial; the picture of social depravity is much overcharged. On the other hand, he made large amends, not only by the portrait of Colonel Newcome, who is almost too much of a Don Quixote, but by the noble figure of Ethel Newcome, the most naturally drawn of all his heroines. Two others stand out as examples of realistic portraiture, Barnes Newcome, the clever, mean, cowardly, successful banker, and Clive Newcome's mother-in-law, the Campaigner. Barnes might form a pendant to Bunyan's Mr. Badman, though his author could not refrain from the false poetic justice of trouncing him in an exaggerated scene of hypocritical self-display. A more reticent art governed his portrait of the Campaigner. She is a marvel of subtle and veracious drawing, a true type of the utterly selfish woman, unable to comprehend the sense of honour, the delicacy, and the generosity that actuate men far inferior to Colonel Newcome. She is a terrible figure, but she is not made a subject for sermonizing, and is left to the justice that a loveless disposition infallibly brings upon itself. There are many scenes of exquisite comedy and episodes of strong dramatic interest that make this in many respects the best of Thackeray's trilogy of novels depicting Vanity Fair.

LEVER, LYTTON, AND DISRAELI

CHARLES LEVER (1806–72).—The Irish novelist, Lever, has affinities with Dickens in his humorous characterization and zest for facetious adventure; from Scott and his imitator, G. P. R. James, he learned the charm of historical romance, especially the romance of war. *The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer* (1839–40) and *Jack Hinton* (1841) were farragoes of Irish life, in garrison at Cork or in Dublin society, packed with diverting characters, high spirits, practical jokes, daring feats, love-making, duelling, and all the boisterousness of irresponsible youth. The Irishman depicted by Lever was not the genuine being drawn with the pen of Miss Edgeworth or by those later delineators of the peasant, William Carleton (1794–1869), and the brothers Michael and John Banim. He was the stage Irishman, a creature of farce; but he appeared in considerable variety and was unfailingly amusing. *Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon* (1841), *Arthur O'Leary* (1844), and *Tom Burke of Ours* (1844) added the martial element, the Peninsular War and campaigning with Napoleon. Mickey Free, Major Monsoon, and Baby Blake, in the first of the three, are the most delightful examples of Lever's humour. He wrote many novels after these; but his style grew more and more restrained, though he reverted to his early manner in *Con Cregan* (1854), and tried extravanganza in *A Day's Ride* (1864), which had a passing success.

LORD LYTTON (1803–73).—Edward Lytton Bulwer, afterwards Lord Lytton, essayed many parts, especially as a writer. He showed an aptness for exploiting any novel suggestion or popular interest that almost amounted to originality. Yet, though he tried many styles, emulating the Gothic romancers, and Scott, Byron, Sterne, and other writers, in turn, he was never first-rate. *Pelham, or the Adventures of a Gentleman* (1828), presents a man of the world, foppish and frivolous, but only so outside, hiding the mind and ambition of a potential statesman beneath an effeminate exterior. *Devereux* was an historical novel of Bolingbroke's time, with the most notable personalities of the Augustan age walking and talking on the stage. More melodramatic historical romances came later: *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834); *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes* (1835); *The Last of the Barons* (1843); and *Harold, or the Last of the Saxon Kings* (1848). *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832) roused Thackeray's ire by representing the criminal as the victim of society, or at least entitled to sympathy. *Ernest Maltravers* and its sequel *Alice* (1837–8) are intrinsically quite as immoral in the indulgence shown to sensuous sentiment and thinly veiled egoism. *Zanoni* (1842) is a sombre and ghastly story of a secret brotherhood possessed of the secret of perpetual youth, with the Reign of Terror as background. *Lucretia* (1847) glorified another criminal—the virtuoso and poisoner Wainewright.

Later Novels.—In the *Caxtons* (1849), its sequel *My Novel* (1853), *What will he do*

with it? (1858), and *Kenelm Chillingly* (1873), Lytton blended realism and didacticism in the form of family memoirs, and infused a strain of sentiment and humour imbibed from Sterne. Here were propounded his views on the Real and the Ideal, of which Thackeray made wholesome fun. *The Haunted and the Haunters* (1859) is a thrilling ghost story; and the succeeding novel, *A Strange Story*, hardly falls short of it in grisly horror. His utopian romance, *The Coming Race* (1871), was once considered philosophical.

DISRAELI'S NOVELS.—Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81), created Earl of Beaconsfield (1876), leader of the Conservative party, and twice Prime Minister of Britain, wrote a series of novels that were not only of high literary merit but also historical records of current views on political and social questions at different stages of his career. *Vivian Grey* (1826) is as flimsy a sketch of a young dandy who would fain establish a new party as Lytton's *Pelham*. *Contarini Fleming* (1832) is an introspective study of a poet; *Henrietta Temple* (1837) a passionate love tale. His first novel to set forth a political manifesto was *Coningsby* (1844), written after he had entered Parliament and spoken on behalf of the Chartists: it gave the programme of the Young England party. The Marquess of Monmouth is a truer portrait of Lord Hertford than was Thackeray's Steyne, and Rigby a more scathing caricature than Wenham of J. W. Croker. *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1845), is a sympathetic study of the two great social classes, the Rich and Poor, and a plea for community of interests. In *Tancred, or the New Crusade* (1847), the heir to a dukedom goes to the Holy Land, in fantastic circumstances, and learns that the regeneration of Christendom must come from a new Anglican Christianity blended with Judaism. Disraeli drew high society in gay and flattering colours in *Lothair* (1870). The late Marquess of Bute is said to have been the original of Lothair, who is the object of a conspiracy to make him a Roman proselyte. Like the rest, this is full of portraits from the political circles in which the author moved. *Endymion* (1880) is an allegory with autobiographical meanings, and an expression of his political philosophy.

THE BRONTË SISTERS

The progress of the novel since Thackeray has been towards a fuller and franker portrayal of the inner life. The issues that settle the ultimate values of things have been brought into the account. In short, the novel has proceeded from the study of manners to the study of the whole of life. The novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, in regard to this change of outlook, have much the same significance in the history of fiction as the *Lyrical Ballads* had in the history of poetry.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË (1816–55) was the eldest of a family of three sisters and a brother, children of the perpetual curate of Haworth, a small moorland town in the West Riding. They lived most of their lives in the tiny parsonage; their novels are

slightly altered versions of their personal stories, a faithful transcript of their impressions of people and manners in their small world; and their poems an expression of their personal emotions, and especially their feeling for nature. Substantially all Charlotte's novels are autobiographical. She first wrote *The Professor* (not published till 1857), in which her own emotional passages with M. Héger, the principal of the school at Brussels where she had been a teacher, are reflected in the story of Frances Henri and Crimsworth. *The Professor* may be regarded as a first study for *Villette* (1853), the fourth novel, in which the Brussels *pensionnat* appears again; Lucy Snowe is now the embodiment of girlhood and nascent love, and Paul Emanuel the lover. But her first published novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847), has a parallel situation, and was just as obviously written out of her own inner life. *Shirley* (1849) takes in a wider variety of people drawn from experience, the story revolving round the home-life of a Yorkshire millowner, who is attacked by rioters, in the disturbances caused by the restrictions on trade during the great French war. There is some little humour in the caricatures of men-folk. In Shirley Keeldar, a study of her sister Emily, we are brought into the most intimate contact with the sensitive, passionate, and beautiful nature of a genuine poetess.

Charlotte Brontë.

Characteristics.—Charlotte Brontë adopted the form of autobiography, not merely because Jane Eyre, Lucy Snowe, and Frances Henri stood for herself, but from her pressing desire to speak out on many things which novelists had hitherto left in discreet silence. A woman with a plain face, with nothing but sincerity of feeling and strong character to recommend her, was an innovation among heroines. No less new was the frank avowal of woman's passion, her revolt against social conventions, narrow religious dogmas, and other obstacles to a fuller life. All the Brontë novels expound the theme of self-realization: this is the idea that spiritualizes and ennobles their conception of love.

There is much in *Jane Eyre* of the romantic circumstance that characterized earlier love stories, even of the accompaniments of Gothic romance. But with the

banishment of the handsome hero and beauteous heroine the love drama became an affair of the spirit. Though she painted with faithful realism the characters and manners of the Yorkshire or Brussels world she had lived in, these things had also a subjective value, and were unconsciously transfigured by her intense feeling. Interest centred in the growth and self-expression of a single personality. The candour of Jane's avowal of her real feelings, in the famous scene where Rochester tells her he is marrying Miss Ingram, is a rebellion against more than conventional etiquette.

> "I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty, and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are."

EMILY BRONTË (1818–48).—Charlotte's sister Emily was her superior in sheer imaginative force. Her poems are the finest and the most considerable in the book of *Poems by Currer* (Charlotte), *Ellis* (Emily), *and Acton* (Anne) *Bell* (1846), and among the many pieces that have been collected posthumously. Anne's contribution was insignificant, and her attempt at fiction, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), based on the sad story of their reprobate brother Branwell Brontë, cannot be compared with the novels of her sisters. *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Emily's one novel, is a strange drama of superhuman passion, hatred, and revenge, laid amidst the sombre Yorkshire moorlands. In the outward setting, it is faithful to the place and the people; several of the characters are drawn with a sure knowledge of human nature and of local traits; others are conventional and vague. But the protagonists belong neither to convention nor to realism. They are human beings transfigured to a higher degree than Charlotte Brontë's idealized personages. In short, they belong to poetry. Heathcliff is a fierce elemental nature, in whom love and revenge pursue their objects even beyond the grave. Yet both he and Catherine, his partner in this idealization of human passion, are no mere poetic phantoms; they are individualized both within and without, and are as clearly natives of the Yorkshire fells as the brutal old hind and the motherly nurse, drawn from an original dear to both Emily and Charlotte. No masterpiece is more of a mixture of crudeness and genius, clumsy construction and instinctive harmony of drama and environment.

Like her sister Charlotte's stories, Emily Brontë's must be interpreted as a spiritual drama. It is not the life she observed around her in the compass of her brief existence, but the fuller life she felt surging in herself, that she expresses in Catherine's avowal of her love for Heathcliff.

> "I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely

contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and *he* remained, *I* should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger; I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath; a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being."

THE KINGSLEYS, CHARLES READE, BORROW, AND TROLLOPE

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819–75).—The Rev. Charles Kingsley was a popular preacher, a lecturer at Queen's College, and a fiery advocate of Christian Socialism, under the well-known pen-name of "Parson Lot," before he began to write fiction. Later he became a professor of modern history at Cambridge, a canon of Westminster, and a controversialist who lost reputation by venturing into the lists against Newman and evoking the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. He also wrote poems of no little merit, and was more than a dabbler in natural history. *Yeast* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* (1848). It is a fierce social pamphlet rather than a novel, denouncing the poverty, immorality, insanitary conditions, the tyranny of the game laws, and other abuses by which the country labourer was being driven into savage discontent. *Alton Locke* (1850) is also a tract as much as a novel, giving realistic pictures of the sweated poor in London at the time of the Chartist agitation, and relating the strenuous efforts and the martyrdom of a social rebel. *Hypatia, or New Foes with an Old Face* (1853), is a vivacious historical novel of ancient Egypt during the strife of Christianity and paganism, given special significance by a parallel with modern antagonisms in religion and ideals of life. The next novel, *Westward Ho!* (1855), is usually rated as Kingsley's masterpiece. It is a kind of national saga of the great days of Elizabethan adventure and ceaseless conflict with the Spaniard in the new and the old worlds. Personages of the stamp of Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins, Grenville, make this an inspiring book for boys, but Kingsley's young Quixotes have a suggestion of modern Cambridge rather than the rough and mutinous spirit of Elizabeth's men. *The Heroes* (1856) and *The Water Babies* (1863) are two story-books for children, the former telling Greek myths over again in the manner of a simple tale of adventure, the other an exquisite instance of the didactic fairy story.

The Muscular Novel.—In *Two Years Ago* (1857) Kingsley drew a full-length portrait of the muscular hero. Tom Thurnall, supposed to be drawn from his brother George, is a hard-bitten, powerfully built, and self-reliant doctor, who has had wild experiences in all parts of the world, and is a defiant rationalist. Washed ashore from a wreck, he establishes himself in a Devon village, fights an outbreak of cholera, and influences many lives, but with many others is chastened by calamity in the Crimean War, and comes to have "even the heart of a little child." He is

contrasted with the effeminate, spasmodic poet, Elsley Vavasour, *alias* Briggs; and there are many other interesting characters, only wanting humour to make the novel a fine one. The descriptions of scenery in Devon and North Wales are done with strong emotional zest. *Hereward the Wake* (1866), a tale of the Saxon patriot and outlaw, is also a muscular novel. Hereward is a true Viking, subject to fits of berserk madness; the inspiration of the Norse sagas is writ large all over the book. The same inspiration appears in the novels of G. A. Lawrence (1827–76), whose heroes were described by detractors as exponents of "muscular blackguardism." *Guy Livingstone, or Thorough* (1857), frankly proclaims the "physical force doctrine," and puts on the stage its complete embodiment in an arrogant young gentleman of classical education and prodigious bodily strength, who, in default of more serious opportunities for his prowess, discharges his pent-up energies in libertine amours and athletic feats. Guy reappears under another name in *Sword and Gown*, and in *Brakespeare* as a free-lance, the champion of a hundred combats, in the great days of Chandos and Du Guesclin.

"Tom Brown's Schooldays."—The classic of muscular Christianity was *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1856), by Thomas Hughes. The gospel of manliness, the feeling that the world is a battlefield, where "the stakes are life and death," is eloquently affirmed both by example and precept in this picture of life at Rugby under Dr. Arnold. Tom Brown comes of a fighting stock, and his progress is envisaged as a series of conflicts, with himself or with more open foes. Such a conception might have been crude, but for the good taste that drew the venerated figure of Arnold brooding over all, signifying the finer and more spiritual side of the doctrine of strength.

Reaction against Muscularity.—Bret Harte put Lawrence's hero to a ridiculous death in his parody, *Guy Heavystone*. Wilkie Collins attacked the muscular school and the popular craze for athleticism in *Man and Wife* (1870), in which the scion of an aristocratic family is champion of all England in the impossible combination of boxing, running, leaping, and rowing, and spends his hours of relaxation in drinking, smoking, and with women—deserts his wife, and ends himself in an attempted murder. But a surer antidote to such a crude philosophy was the sober realism of Trollope and Mrs. Gaskell and the austere thought of George Eliot.

HENRY KINGSLEY (1830–76), the brother of Charles Kingsley, was a restless being, who took no degree at Oxford, and came back from the Australian goldfields as poor as he set out, except in the versatile experiences which were the riches of Tom Thurnall in *Two Years Ago*. Charles being now at the zenith of his fame, Henry naturally tried to exploit this useful material in novels based on personal reminiscences. *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859) is a narrative of life on the big cattle-stations of New South Wales, enlivened by thrilling adventures with bushrangers. *Ravenshoe* is a story of the West Country, artless and confused in

structure but full of diverse characters, all of them singularly lovable. He possessed some of the humour that his brother lacked; and, though hasty and careless, he had a magical gift of description, and in single episodes attained a vividness and glamour superior in many ways to his brother's more studied effects.

CHARLES READE (1814–84).—A novelist who would have been a genius could indefatigable energy and industry have made him one was Charles Reade, the author of some plays and a score of novels. *Peg Woffington* (1853) was made out of the drama *Masks and Faces*, by Reade and Tom Taylor. *Christie Johnstone* (1853) portrayed the rough and hearty fishing-folk of a Scottish village, as a refreshing contrast to the *blasé* and affected creatures of fashion and sham culture prevalent in novels and in contemporary life. *It is Never Too Late to Mend* (1856), shows Reade employing his method of accumulating information in vast notebooks, on a realistic story meant to expose the cruelties practised in English gaols. The same documentary plan was followed in his best work, *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861), a splendid piece of historical narrative relating the adventurous career of the father of Erasmus. This brilliant picture of the Renaissance period in the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy, falls short only of the great historical novels of Scott and Thackeray. The scenes of the most notable of his later novels were laid in his own day, and in them he utilized his system of investigation and tabulating facts in the exposure of social evils.

WILKIE COLLINS (1824–89), a follower of Dickens in character drawing, distinguished himself by the construction of neat and ingenious plots. In *The Dead Secret* the reader's curiosity is kept on the stretch till the moment that the secret is revealed. In *The Woman in White*, Collins seems to invite the reader's ingenuity in discovering the puppet heroine's identity and detecting the real object of a villainous conspiracy. *The Moonstone* has the most romantic of his mystery plots, telling of a famous gem stolen by Hindu priests.

GEORGE BORROW (1803–81).—The fact that George Borrow is counted among the novelists shows how versatile and comprehensive a form the novel has become. Both *The Bible in Spain* (1843) and *Lavengro* (1851), with its sequel *The Romany Rye* (1857), are stories of Borrow's own adventures, and this without disguise. It is their manner, not their matter—although that is partly at least fictitious—which brings them within the definition of a novel. Though he retains the autobiographic "I," Borrow handles himself and his experiences objectively, develops his characters on imaginative lines, works up dramatic scenes and dialogues, and throws over all an atmosphere of romance that makes an English dingle or a bridge over the Thames as glamorous as the wilds of Asturias and the Sierra Morena. The picturesque Isobel Berners in *Lavengro* is as romantic as Di Vernon.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815–82), son of the Frances Trollope who wrote two caustic satires, *The Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1831) and *The Vicar of Wrexhill*

(1837), and raised storms of recrimination, was the literary son of Thackeray, but a long way below him in genius. An official in the Post Office, he found time to produce some four or five dozen lengthy works of fiction, on a system of so many words a day; and of these a good many rank respectably among average novels, while about a dozen come very near the works of the masters. He began in 1847–8 with two Irish novels, written whilst he was holding an appointment in Ireland. But it was *The Warden* (1855), and still more *Barchester Towers* (1857), that showed his real strength. With sober realism, quiet humour, and a studious avoidance of caricature, sensation, or any other distortion of everyday life, he depicted the bishops, archdeacons, canons, and minor clergy of Barchester, with their wives and families, and the society of the cathedral city and the neighbouring villages.

George Borrow.

In *The Warden*, a gentle and blameless old clergyman is suddenly attacked for receiving his income from the profits of an ancient charity, to the alleged detriment of the poor. Ashamed to face the tempest of obloquy, he resigns, and is immediately succeeded by a needy parson who does not entertain such conscientious scruples. *Barchester Towers* resumes the history of the episcopal society so ably portrayed. The appointment of a new bishop—not the ambitious cleric Archdeacon Grantley, who had been waiting to assume the mitre—starts the comedy in which the clergy band themselves under the Archdeacon's leadership against the Rev. Obadiah Slope, who tries to reform the cathedral services, encouraged by the protection of the henpecked bishop, or rather his immortal wife, Mrs. Proudie. *Doctor Thorne* (1858), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), *The Small House at Allington* (1864), and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), complete the tale of the Barsetshire Chronicles, and carry on the history of these and many other characters to an impressive close, the comedy being chequered with tragic pathos. Trollope's workmanlike character-drawing and skilful management of such ordinary motives as love, family squabbles, legal disputes, and petty jealousies, are notable in *The Three Clerks* (1857), *Orley Farm* (1861–2), *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864–5), and *The Claverings* (1867). He was almost as successful in delineating political society in *Phineas Finn* (1866) and *Phineas Redux* (1874) as he had been with clerical society. He marred the homely veracity and sobriety of his work whenever he ventured outside his sphere, which was pre-eminently the faithful study of ordinary life, without the interposition of any theories, critical views, or other bias.

PHILOSOPHICAL REALISM—MRS. GASKELL AND GEORGE ELIOT

MRS. GASKELL (1810–65).—Besides the delicate charm of her short stories, especially *Cranford*, sketching character in a dainty miniature style that has a touch of Jane Austen, Mrs. Gaskell, the wife of a Nonconformist minister at Manchester, has the distinction of having pointed out the way for George Eliot to the deliberate analysis of motive and of the secret springs of character, so brilliantly exemplified in *Adam Bede*, *Romola*, and *Middlemarch*. A large proportion of her tales are at bottom as didactic in intention as Miss Edgeworth's. In *Mary Barton, and other Stories* (1848), the title-story shows the facts of industrial life, poverty, ignorance, and insanitary surroundings, as she had witnessed them among the Manchester factory hands. Later, she attempted a broader study of the problem of capital and labour, in *North and South* (1855), and drew the portrait of a just and philanthropic employer. *Ruth* is a story of seduction, and of an innocent fraud bringing down retribution and tragedy. Along with *Mary Barton* and *Ruth* were included touching little love tales, such as *Cousin Phillis;* delicate portraits, like *My French Master*, which have a distinct ethical value; and humorous sketches of provincial life, such as *Mr. Harrison's Confessions.*

Mrs. Gaskell.

"Cranford."—The masterpiece of all efforts in this last genre is *Cranford* (1853), in the next volume of stories. It is not a novel, but a finely graduated set of character paintings, with little story, taken from a little old-fashioned town in Cheshire, chiefly inhabited by widows and old maids living in genteel poverty. The incidents are slight: tea-drinkings, whist parties, formal calls, gossip, with a brief episode

or two that touch the heart. Cranford, which was really Knutsford, where Mrs. Gaskell had been brought up, was again the scene in *Wives and Daughters*, an unfinished novel going more deeply into character and the forces that control its development than any of her previous stories. In the style of *Cranford* was the best piece in *Lizzie Leigh, and other Stories* (1855), a finished character-portrait of a wonderful old lady, *My Lady Ludlow*, full of aristocratic prejudices, tempered by humour and good nature. The sterner manner of George Eliot's studies of crime and its effects was anticipated in *The Crooked Branch*.

GEORGE ELIOT (1819–80).—Mary Anne Evans, who wrote under the name of George Eliot, was born in a Warwickshire farmhouse, and educated at Nuneaton and Coventry. She came to middle age before it was suggested to her by the philosophical and critical writer, George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived for many years, that she should attempt novel writing. Before this she had translated Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, and Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, and served for a time as assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*. She absorbed Positivism through the medium of Herbert Spencer, abjuring the Evangelicalism in which she had been brought up, without however losing her firm hold on Christian ethics. Her peculiar endowment as a novelist was a thorough grounding in modern thought and theoretical psychology, and an intimate knowledge of many varieties of human nature acquired in early life among country people in the Midlands. All this would hardly have made her anything but a heavy didactic novelist but for the humour, as profound as her philosophy of life, which was a vital ingredient, especially of her earlier novels.

George Eliot.
(From a drawing by Sir Frederick Burton.)

Works. — Her first stories, *Amos Barton*, *Mr. Gilfil's Love-story*, and *Janet's Repentance*, appeared in *Blackwood*, and were collected in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858). Her two best novels, *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*, followed in 1859 and 1860; and in 1861 she published an exquisite country idyll, *Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe*. These exhausted her original vein of material from English country life, and she now turned to the notebook method employed by Charles Reade. *Romola* (1863) was the result of a minute study of Florentine history in the Renaissance period. George Eliot said that she began *Romola* a young woman and finished it an old woman. *Felix Holt the Radical* (1866) and *Middlemarch* (1871–2), though they returned to English scenes, were not more spontaneous, although the

latter contains some of her finest work in the sphere of character and philosophic analysis of life; and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), a study of Jewish life and Zionism, with a grave and forbidding moral problem forming the intellectual framework, is still more laboured.

Her Earlier Novels.—The three stories in *Scenes of Clerical Life* were closely akin to the stronger of Mrs. Gaskell's studies of actual life; but they went more deeply into the dark hinterland of character, and the persons are much more real. In *Adam Bede* George Eliot put forth her full strength. A thoughtless young squire, attracted by a pretty face, seduces a dairymaid. Crime, remorse, and suffering for innocent and guilty alike are the consequences. George Eliot, observed M. Brunetière, makes you see how a transformation can take place in a human soul; she makes you see how it comes about, and how small and insignificant, almost null, is the part in it of what we call chance.[1] Her novels, in short, illustrate her Positivism on the psychological and ethical side. But despite her acceptance of Comte's ethical doctrines, and her revolt from dogmatic Christianity, she more or less unconsciously acknowledged a spiritual element that has no logical place in her scheme of determinism. External events are but the outward manifestations of a series of causes and effects that are happening in our inner life. The deeds in which the inner self issues into actuality are the decisive factors in human history. But the machinery of passion and volition does not work with automatic certainty, because, her idealism admits, a higher call—faith, the voice of duty—may turn the course of events. This idealism inspires the beautiful figure of Dinah Morris, drawn from her own aunt Elizabeth Evans, preaching a simple, undogmatic Christianity to the rustics of Loamshire. She probably learned from Dickens the art of painting rustic scenes with the infinite small touches of a Dutch artist. This is a characteristic that differentiates the novels before *Romola* from those that came after, when she had used up the richest of her material. Her humour shines forth in the aphorisms of Mrs. Poyser, and of the woman-hating dominie Bartle Massey.

"The Mill on the Floss" and "Silas Marner."—From the countryside of Staffordshire and Derbyshire George Eliot transferred her scene in *The Mill on the Floss* to the little town of St. Ogg's, which is Gainsborough. The brother and sister in whose history we are asked to watch the pathetic conflict of affection and antipathy stand psychologically for George Eliot herself and her brother Isaac. The novel is a perfect example of George Eliot's power of interpreting human nature dramatically. The natural talk of the rustic world is reproduced with the same fidelity as in *Adam Bede*, and Mrs. Poyser's humour is matched by the comic dialogues of the three aunts. *Silas Marner* is a beautiful piece in a minor key, containing in small compass all the best of George Eliot—her humanism, her pathos, her genial comedy.

The Later Novels.—A work of art, according to the Comtist definition, is a concrete

[1] Brunetière: *Le Roman Naturaliste—Le Naturalisme Anglais.*

realization of philosophic ideas. George Eliot's earlier novels are more than that; but this is a fair description of *Romola* and the rest. *Romola* is the sternest of all her dramas of temptation, crime, and retribution. But study and thought have overborne the original creative impulse, now that she has deserted the familiar scenes of her childhood. *Felix Holt* is a special study of the working classes after the Reform Bill, and of the militant activities of Radical politicians. *Middlemarch*, in spite of being too big and too complicated, is one of her finest novels, and recaptures some of the charm of her Warwickshire memories. It is a huge bundle of life histories, all enforcing the same moral. Dorothea's vague and fruitless aspirations, Bulstrode's moral and financial downfall, Edward Casaubon's wasted labour on the Key to All Mythologies, the disillusionment of the brilliant Dr. Lydgate—are each and all a parable of lost ideals. The happier lives of Caleb (said to be a study of George Eliot's father) and Mary Garth give the obverse.

Her Influence.—George Eliot's influence was for a time omnipotent in English fiction, though it was not the delightful humanist of *Silas Marner* and *The Mill on the Floss* that set the pattern to other novelists, but the austere philosopher who had gone through the ordeal of *Romola* and written herself out in *Daniel Deronda*. For a good quarter of a century after *Romola*, though there were novelists who freely obeyed the dictates of genius, the novel on which critical attention was focused, and which cultivated readers looked upon as fulfilling the orthodox theory of fiction, was the novel that professed to be a diagnosis of society, so firmly grounded on accurate observation and logical deduction that its conclusions were as irrefutable as the census returns. The works of her second period were of a kind singularly congenial to the Puritan temper of New England, where a school of novelists appropriated her methods of analysing the conflicts of egoism and conscience, the evolution of character, and similar ethical problems, amid new surroundings. Both in America and in England her influence is by no means exhausted, either on readers or writers.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—All the novels named above are available, for the most part in editions by numerous publishers and at all kinds of prices.

Critical Studies.—English Men of Letters: *Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot* (Macmillan v.y.).—Gissing, G.: *Dickens* (Blackie, 1898).—Chesterton, G. K.: *Dickens* (Methuen, 1906).—Lanier, S.: *The English Novel* (Scribner, 1883).—Saintsbury, G.: *The English Novel* (Dent, 1913).—Stephen, L.: *Hours in a Library* (2nd and 3rd series, Smith, Elder, 1876); *Studies of a Biographer*, Vol. IV., *Trollope* (Duckworth, 1902).—Williams, H.: *Two Centuries of the English Novel* (Smith, Elder, 1911).

Chapter 7. VICTORIAN HISTORY

From Gibbon to Hallam—History as a Science: Grote, Buckle, Freeman, Stubbs, Lecky, Gardiner, Green—The Art of History: Carlyle, Macaulay, Froude—Military History: Napier, Kinglake

FROM GIBBON TO HALLAM

Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, the greatest work produced by any British historian, was completed in 1778, and for thirty years thereafter there was little historical work done in England. There was no parallel in these islands to the intense historical activity in Germany which produced Niebuhr, Savigny, and Ranke. In Gibbon all the arts of the historian were blended; he was moralist, philosopher, and man of letters, as well as chronicler, and if his conception of a scientific method falls short of the rigour of to-day, it was far beyond anything contemplated by his immediate successors. Among the lesser names of this transition period may be noted William Mitford (1744–1827), who produced *A History of Greece*, which was not superseded till Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875) published his abler and less biased work on the same subject between 1835 and 1844. Dr. John Lingard, a Roman Catholic professor, issued his *History of England* between 1819 and 1830. Lingard's book is written from a special point of view, and is never free from a propagandist purpose; but he worked honestly at his sources, and was the master of a clear and pleasant prose style. Robert Southey (1774–1843) produced a number of historical works—a *History of Brazil* (1810–19) and a *History of the Peninsular War* (1823–32), but he is better remembered as the author of two admirable biographies—a *Life of Nelson* (1813) and a *Life of John Wesley* (1820).

Hallam.—The first considerable historian after Gibbon was Henry Hallam (1777–1859). He was a trained lawyer, and a man of immense erudition; but above all things he was a man of a sober and central judgment, who, fortified with a moderate Whig philosophy, endeavoured to see the past as a consequence of the strife of great principles. Throughout he is an ardent moralist, regarding history as a basis for a reasoned optimism and a confidence in the advance of liberty and justice. His *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818) is a series of self-contained surveys presenting rather a philosophic outline than a detailed history. His *Constitutional History of England*, dealing with the period between Henry VII. and George II., was the first attempt at a type of history which was to have many successors. Hallam also produced *An Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the 15th, 16th, and 17th Centuries* (1837–8), which is still a valuable and accurate encyclopædia. Hallam had a powerful mind, a little narrow and dry, but eminently sane and masculine.

His style is cold, dignified, and workmanlike, without heights and without disasters. He has little colour or grace and small imaginative power, and his merits are to be sought in the firm architectural lines of his work and in its invariable lucidity and moderation.

HISTORY AS A SCIENCE

Historical writing in Britain since Hallam has tended to fall into two distinct classes—that in which the scientific interest is uppermost, and that in which a definite effort is made to raise history to a literary art. The two classes are not exclusive, for the scientific historian often attains to the literary graces, and the literary historian rarely lacks something of the scientific standpoint. Both schools were apt to produce moralists, who either read contemporary conditions into the past or drew from the past a moral for their own times. But the division is useful, since it enables us to classify according to temperament. In the first class the line of succession is Grote, Buckle, Freeman, Lecky, Stubbs, Gardiner, and Lord Acton, and the great names of the second are Carlyle, Macaulay, and Froude.

George Grote (1794–1871) was a typical philosophical Radical who sought to apply both the scientific bias and the political principles of that school to the study of ancient history. Irritated by Mitford's Tory interpretation of Greek history, he produced between 1845 and 1856 a *History of Greece*, based on a careful study of the documents then at the disposal of the world, and full of that assurance of the invulnerability of its judgment which marked his school of thought. Grote was a man of affairs, and his book is always distinguished by good sense, and though much of it has been superseded by later archæological discoveries, it remains as a great intellectual achievement. His style is ugly and hard, and no book on Greece has ever been written with less Attic grace.

Buckle.—Of the same temper was Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–62), whose unfinished *History of Civilization in England* (1857–61) is one of the boldest attempts at the dogmatic interpretation of history ever made. His philosophy was of the harsh materialistic type which becomes at times almost comically short-sighted; but his handling of facts and his vigorous deductions from them are always impressive, and his study of 17th-century Scotland is in its way a masterpiece of sharp, narrow, intellectual analysis. In both Buckle and Grote there was a genuine desire to ascertain truth according to what they regarded as a scientific standard. The same impulse may be found in *The History of Christianity* by Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868), in the *Enquiry into the Credibility of Early Roman History* and *Remarks on the Use and Abuse of some Political Terms* by Sir George Cornewall Lewis (1806–63), and in the studies in the early history of institutions and laws of Sir Henry Maine (1822–88).

Freeman.—Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92) believed in science, liberalism, and, above all, in the study of history as a source of practical wisdom. He held, too, that all history is continuous, being the exemplification in practice of eternal principles; but while his ethical interest is strong, his judgments are kept in order by his view of the importance of the comparative method. His main works are his *History of the Norman Conquest* (1867–79), and his unfinished *History of Sicily*. Freeman's erudition is great, but few historians of his intellectual calibre have been so lacking in the literary arts. His rhetoric is crude and undistinguished, and his ordinary style is flat and monotonous—the style, as has been said, of a lecturer who has to emphasize his points by repetition. Yet he has a large historical vision, and, though apt to be unfair to his contemporaries, he laboured after justness in his historical estimates.

Stubbs.—William Stubbs (1825–1901) was a greater man of letters than Freeman, but he chose for his branch of history one in which the details are apt to be so arid that literary graces have little scope. No British historian has ever been a completer master of his material, and if we seek an example of the scientific method at its best we may find it in him. Apart from editing many charters and chronicles, he produced *A Constitutional History of England* (1873–8) which covers his subject down to 1485. His other works are chiefly reprinted lectures, such as *On Mediæval and Modern History*, *On European History*, and *The Early Plantagenets*. Stubbs had little desire to read modern politics into the past, or to preach any contemporary moral. He altogether disbelieved in the philosophy of history, which he defined as " in nine cases out of ten a generalization founded rather on ignorance of points in which particulars differ, than on any strong grasp of one in which they agree." He is a master of the art of arrangement; his mind is at all times most scrupulous and candid; his style is close, compact, but never ugly, and often subtly interpenetrated with humour.

Lecky.—The early work of William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838–1903) was on the same lines as that of Buckle, but with a larger outlook and a wiser judgment. His contribution to this branch of the subject can be found in *The History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) and *The History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869). His *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878–90) shows his laborious industry and the skill and discretion of his detachment. He makes no attempt at fine writing, but there is a sober grace in his orderly sequence, and in his descriptions of social life he rises often to a real animation. He is one of the most convincing of historians, suffering from no party bias or infirmity of temper.

Gardiner.—Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829–1902) was a type of historical student more common in Germany than in England. He gave up his whole life to his work,

and, unlike most of his contemporaries, was never drawn into politics. His *History of England* (1603–42) appeared between 1863 and 1882. Four more volumes (1886–91) dealt with the Great Civil War, and another three (1895–1901) with the history of the Commonwealth and Protectorate. He is perhaps the greatest of English scientific historians, and he who gleans after Gardiner will find little to reward him. He is not only accurate in his facts, but singularly true and just in his estimates, for we see him laboriously stating both sides, and we see, too, the mental processes by which he arrives at his final conclusion. He has in the highest degree the historic sense, for he never reads later mental processes into the past, and it may fairly be said that no historian has ever built up more convincingly the *mind* of a dead statesman or society. His style is a little flat and dull; but it is always honest, and when he is moved by a great argument, as in the description of Cromwell, he rises to passages of real literary beauty. He has small pictorial power, and has not Macaulay's gift of visualizing the physical details of a scene or figure; but he can interpret most finely and exactly a mind and character. His labours have altogether transformed the world's view of the 17th century in England.

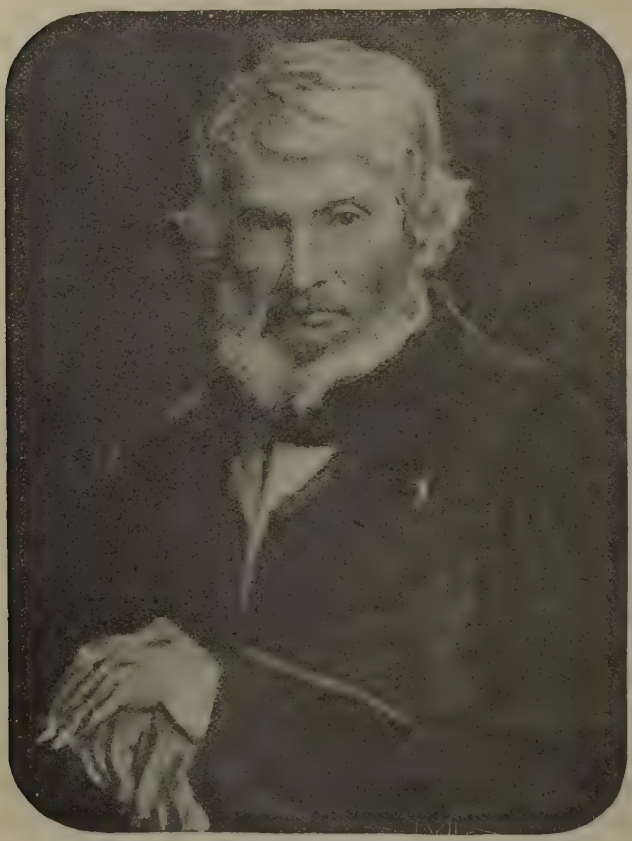
Green.—John Richard Green (1837–83) belonged in theory to the school of Freeman, but his main works, *A Short History of the English People* (1874) and *The History of the English People* (1877–80), were an attempt at a vivid popular history. He wished, as he said, to delineate the "constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of a nation itself," and he was less concerned with wars and politics than with social conditions. Green's work is a brilliant performance, perfect of its kind, and for all its vivacity and colour it is based on considerable research. His style is agreeable and animated. Green provides the link between the orthodox, academic, philosophic and scientific school of historians and the school which conceived of history first and foremost as an art.

HISTORY AS AN ART

The scrupulous scientific conscience in history is apt to lead to *aphasia*. Lord Acton, for example (1834–1902), the most learned of modern Englishmen, though he contemplated all his life a great *History of Freedom*, left behind him only a few volumes of republished lectures. The 19th century was fortunate in possessing three historians who, following the tradition of Thucydides, saw history more as a picture and an interpretation than as a bloodless scientific analysis. Carlyle, Macaulay, and Froude have all specific merits from the historical point of view; but even had these been lacking they would rank as great men of letters.

Carlyle.—Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was many things besides historian, and his philosophical and controversial works are treated elsewhere (p. 526); but it is probable that on his histories his fame will chiefly rest. *The French Revolution* was

published in 1837. In 1845 he issued an edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*. *The History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, commonly called Frederick the Great*, appeared between 1858 and 1865. He also published a number of historical essays, such as those on "Mirabeau" and "The Early Kings of Norway," which are collected among his miscellaneous works.



Thomas Carlyle.
(From the painting by Sir John Millais, R.A.)

As an historian Carlyle had no detachment, and persisted in reading the past in the light of the present, seeking always for a moral. But his strong imagination and immense pictorial power made him constantly forget his propagandist purpose, and he describes the past with all the fury and fire of one who had himself lived through its crises. In his way he was a laborious investigator, but erratic and disorganized; he earnestly desired to be honest, but his emotion often led him to brighten or darken the colours overmuch. His uncanny psychological insight frequently revealed to him the truth, but it comes rather as a revelation than as an argument. He can with difficulty keep his temper, and condemns or praises with the vehemence of an advocate, and he is apt to overlook the duller aspects of constitutional and legal history. Often, too, he becomes tired and petulant. His passion for the grotesque, and even the melodramatic, gives a perpetual twist to his vision. He was also cumbered with a perverted principle of interpretation. He detested masses of men and worshipped the hero, and was inclined to seek the key to a movement too much in the single great man. Moreover, he had something of the modern German belief that might and right are identical—not only in the

last resort, but always—and his test of truth and greatness was apt to be only success.

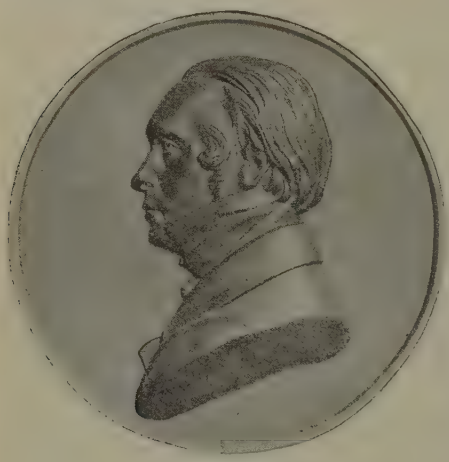
His supreme merit is that he gives to the men and women of the past a fierce reality, and makes their doings live for us with the vividness of a witnessed scene. The history of the French Revolution has been often more justly and wisely written, but no other man has given Carlyle's picture of its fury and futility, its heroism and its squalor. His Calvinism gave him a temperamental affinity to Cromwell, and it was he who first plucked the Lord Protector from the fog of misunderstandings and set him among the great men of the English race. His *Frederick the Great*, which at one time was a textbook of the German Staff, is ill planned and ill proportioned; but it is a gallery of marvellous portraits, and Carlyle alone of his contemporaries grasped the spiritual force behind modern Germany. His style is not well suited for elaborate history. There is little balance and poise in it; it is perpetually superheated, and often in the highest degree obscure and ungainly. But for all that it is a great style, capable of rising to a memorable eloquence, and of concreting into phrases which are more illuminating than other men's chapters. Carlyle excelled in historical portraiture. Take this of Alexander Leighton:

> A monstrous pyramidal head, evidently full of confused harsh logic, toil, sorrow, and much other confusion, wrinkly brows arched up partly in wonder, partly in private triumph over many things, most extensive cheeks, fat, yet flaccid, puckered, corrugated, flowing down like a flood of corrugation, wherein the mouth is a mere corrugated eddy, frowned over by an amorphous bulwark of nose; the whole you would say *supported* by the neckdress, by the doublet-collar and front resting on it, surmounted by deluges of tangled tattered hair.

There are thousands of such pictures, and, whether they are historically just or unjust, they are unforgettable. Moreover, his tempestuous spirit gives to his historical writing a kind of epic swing, so that the narrative is always moving, and the past is presented not as still life, as in so many histories, but with all the swirl and gusto of reality. Carlyle as an historian stands alone. He can never be imitated, and should not be followed. His style and his habits of thought are not conducive to the discovery or exposition of historical truth, but beyond doubt his was one of the greatest minds that ever applied itself to history.

Macaulay.—Thomas Babington Macaulay, Lord Macaulay (1800–59), was preeminently an historian, and practically all his work, except *The Lays of Ancient Rome*, may be classed in this category. The son of Zachary Macaulay, one of the leaders of the Abolitionist movement, his mind early accepted the Whig creed, and he rose to be one of the most distinguished of Whig politicians. His experience in Parliament and in India admirably fitted him for the study of history. The two first volumes of his *History of England* appeared in 1848; the third and fourth in 1855; and the fifth and sixth after his death. His essays were contributed mainly to the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The man has been revealed to the world by one of the most charming biographies in the language, written by his nephew, Sir George Otto Trevelyan.

Macaulay, without attaining to the most exact kind of scholarship in any one subject, early made himself a master of the best literature, ancient and modern. His retentive memory enabled him to go on amassing learning throughout his life, but he bore it easily and passed it all through the alembic of a quick and virile mind. His political faith was Liberalism in the largest sense, a genuine passion for humanity, freedom and toleration. He had little subtlety, and what could not be expressed in clear ringing English he did not see at all. His intellectual texture was commonplace, but in the most exalted sense of that word, for he shared all the feelings and prejudices of the ordinary man, and could express them in a style which the simplest could appreciate and admire. He desired popularity, and he achieved it, for he has told us that his aim in his history was "to produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." He wrote history as Sir Walter Scott wrote novels, with immense zest for every picturesque detail, and at the same time with a keen interest in those movements of thought which find practical expression in churches and parliaments. His Whiggism has been overstated. He held the view that "it was the Revolution of 1688 which brought the Crown into harmony with the Parliament, and the First Reform Bill which brought the Parliament into harmony with the Nation"—doctrines for which there is much to be said. In his history he can be very severe with Whig leaders, and on the whole he is just to their opponents. His weakness rather lies in the fact that while he could understand Whiggism, which was above all things lucid, sensible, and practical, he had little appreciation for any creed which approximated to mysticism. He held that if a doctrine were incapable of a good sound prosaic defence it was probably untrue.



Lord Macaulay.

He was fortunate in the period he chose for his history, for it gave him a subject in which his preferences and dislikes had the fullest scope. He is a master in the art of construction. Battles, debates in Parliament, court intrigues, social movements, all fall most aptly into their proper place. His narrative never halts, and his power of constructing a background is unrivalled. So austere a critic as Lord Acton said, "In description and in narrative I think he is the first of all writers of history." He builds up his scenes by a multitude of small details, like an historical novelist. He is very frequently inaccurate in such details, and it may be argued with some justice that he is often essentially shallow in his verdicts upon this or that

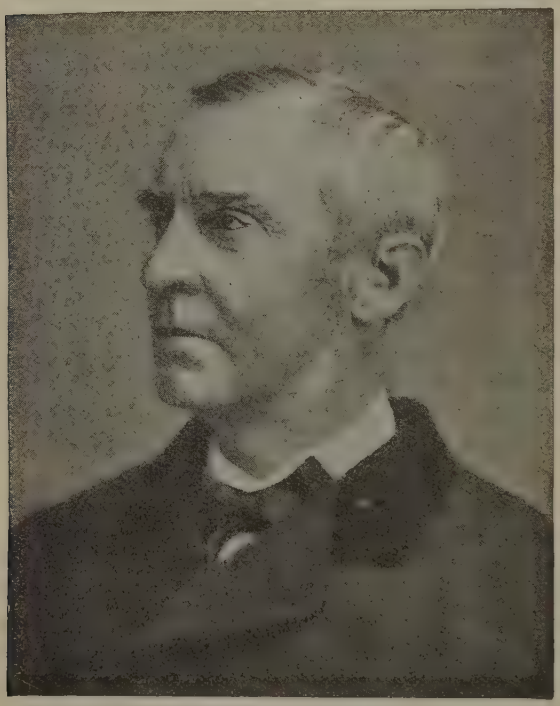
character. But in his statement of the broad movements of history he is invariably just and true. Of political bias there is very little. He makes a god of William and a fiend of James and a fallen angel of Marlborough, not because of his politics, but because of his moral antipathies. His style has obvious faults. There is a perpetual clang of hammers in it, and his habit of building up by neat antitheses often leads him to create a false impression. But for the purposes for which he used it, it was a nearly perfect tool. Its untiring vigour gives the same atmosphere of reality as Carlyle's very different manner. It is a perfect medium, too, for good advocacy, and few things are better in his work than his statements of the arguments for or against a policy or a conclusion. Its worst defect is its metallic hardness; but when he is deeply moved this fault is forgotten. Such a passage as the account of Monmouth's burial in St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower shows him at his best. He himself has made the most just criticism of his style: "My manner is, I think, and the world thinks, on the whole a good one; but it is very near a bad manner indeed, and those characteristics of my style which are most easily copied are the most questionable."

Macaulay's reputation suffered some eclipse after his death; he had been over-praised, and consequently there was a reaction under which he was undervalued. The critics complained that he lacked qualities which he never claimed to possess. But his work remains one of the great possessions of the British people—an introduction to historical study for the ordinary reader, and also one of the most brilliantly coloured and artistically composed reconstructions of the past in any literature.

Froude.—James Anthony Froude (1818–94) was a mind more akin to Carlyle than to Macaulay. He had an interest in metaphysics alien to the latter, and was altogether of a rarer and subtler temperament. He was educated at Oxford during the Tractarian movement, and was much influenced by Newman till Carlyle claimed his allegiance. He relinquished his idea of becoming a priest and devoted his life to historical work. His miscellaneous papers, partly historical and partly philosophical, are contained in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1867–83); his *History of England* was issued between the years 1856 and 1870, and covered roughly the period of the English Reformation. He also published various volumes of lectures, and a brilliant sketch of Julius Cæsar.

Froude as an historian is less inaccurate than Macaulay, but more essentially unfair. He did not believe that history could be a science, and in all his writing he has a strong ethical interest and a definite artistic purpose. He wished to make it a drama, and a moral drama. The reaction from his early training gave him a strong bias against ecclesiasticism, and he has written of the defeat of Catholicism in England with a passion almost lyrical in its fervour. Macaulay attempted to be just even to people whom he disliked, but Froude in his attacks had the unhesitating vigour of an ancient Israelitish prophet. On the other hand, it should be said that the charges of inaccuracy with which it was at one time the fashion to assail him, are

mostly unfounded; he is less inaccurate than Freeman. To counterbalance his dislikes he possessed great enthusiasms—an intense admiration for the makers of the British Empire, and for British seamen at all stages of their history, so that he writes of the Devon adventurers of Elizabeth's reign as if he had shared in their adventures. This enthusiasm made him excel in presenting the pageantry of history, and no English writer, not even Macaulay, has a greater pictorial gift. Many of his passages are unmatched even in the best romantic fiction. But in addition to this gift he has a habit which he learned from Carlyle of interspersing passages of argument, done with extraordinary lucidity and grace. His mind always sought for dogma and never attained it, and, since his creed was thus held in suspension, he was enabled to indulge himself in dialectical subtleties as if for their own sake. It is not possible to extract from him a definite ethical code, as can be done in the case of Macaulay. His prejudices and prepossessions we know, but his faith remains a series of questions. It has been said truly that he had an *anima naturaliter Catholica*, and would have been happy to accept the authority of a Church if the accidents of his training had not made such a solution impossible.



James Anthony Froude.

The greatest merit of Froude is his style. It has much of Newman's art and general cadence, but it has a more living movement. Of all historical styles of our time it is the most perfectly suited to the composition of a great work. It is never rhetorical, but by imperceptible stages it quickens and colours till sometimes it reaches the highest level of eloquence. It is in the true canonical tradition of English prose.

MILITARY HISTORY

Military history which is more than a mere Staff College text-book and is also literature, is well represented in 19th-century England.

Napier.—Sir William Francis Patrick Napier (1785–1860) published his *History of the War in the Peninsula* between the years 1828 and 1840. Napier was a strong Radical, and wrote his book partly to vindicate his hero, Sir John Moore, and partly as a counterblast to Southey's *History*, written from the Tory standpoint. He had full access to official documents on both sides, had an admirable understanding of strategy and tactics, and from the technical point of view few military historians have been better equipped. But his strong opinions imported into his writing a vigour not often found in military treatises, and the book abounds in brilliant battle pictures and heroic episodes. He never attempts fine writing but often achieves it, and his best passages have a noble simplicity and great beauty of cadence.

Kinglake.—Alexander William Kinglake (1809–91), the historian of the Crimean War, had something of Napier's high temper, but much less of his art. His eight volumes on *The Invasion of the Crimea* appeared between 1863 and 1887. They are violently controversial, and often obviously unfair; his delineations of character are poor, and there is much tortured writing. Yet the book lives by its movement and colour, and has many passages, like Napier's greater work, where strong emotion purifies and simplifies the style. It is indeed the good fortune of the military historian who is in love with his subject that when the great moment comes in his narrative he rarely fails to rise to it.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

There are numerous reprints of the works of all the historians referred to above. See also FROUDE: *Life of Carlyle*.—NICHOL, JOHN: *Carlyle* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1902).—TREVELYAN, Sir G. O.: *Life of Macaulay* (2 vols., Longmans, 1876).—MORISON, J. COTTER: *Macaulay* (English Men of Letters, Macmillan, 1882).—PAUL, HERBERT: *Froude* (Pitman, 1902).—GOOCH, G. P.: *History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century* (Longmans, 1913).

Chapter 8. PROSE OF REFLECTION

The professed Philosophers: Bentham, Mackintosh, Hamilton, Mill, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Green, Caird, F. H. Bradley—Teachers and Critics: Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman, Matthew Arnold, Bagehot, Dr. John Brown, Leslie Stephen, John Morley

THE PROFESSED PHILOSOPHERS

The history of English thought in the 19th century on its more technical side falls into clearly marked divisions. It begins with the rise of the Utilitarian school, akin to the philosophical Radicals in politics and owing much to the French and English thinkers of the late 18th century. The passing of this fashion was followed by two movements, one finding its origin in natural science and associated with the new doctrine of evolution, and the other representing a return to the standpoint of German metaphysics and a revival of the teaching of Kant and Hegel. By the close of the century the influence of both movements was on the wane, the assurance of the evolutionists being somewhat weakened by metaphysical difficulties, and the neo-Hegelian school having exhausted its novelty and become, in the usual cycle of speculation, an object of critical assaults.

Bentham. — Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was born in London, educated at Westminster School and Queen's College, Oxford, and became a member of Lincoln's Inn in 1763. His tranquil life was almost wholly devoted to the exposition of those ultimate problems which face the legislator, and to the construction of an ideal legal system. In the tone of his thought he belonged to the 18th century. Bentham pursued to its extreme limit the once-popular ideal—"the greatest happiness of the greatest number." As a writer he is at his best in argument, where in the detection of fallacies he is admirably clear and not without a certain dry humour. Yet his aim was always constructive, and he laid down the most definite conclusions about the origins of society, the purpose of civilization, the functions of Government, and the true meaning of liberty. The anonymous *Fragment on Government* (1776) was followed in 1789 by his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.* Throughout his life he laboured zealously at the application of his theories to practical measures of legal reform. Mill, who regarded him as one of the great benefactors of humanity, has drawn the portrait of this self-sufficing scholar. "He had neither internal experience nor external; the quiet, even tenor of his life, and his healthiness of mind, conspired to exclude him from both. He never knew prosperity and adversity, passion nor satiety; he never had even the experiences which sickness gives; he lived from childhood to the age of eighty-five in boyish health. . . . How much of human nature slumbered in him he knew not, neither can we know."

Mackintosh.—Sir James Mackintosh (1765–1832), son of a Highland officer, was born near Inverness, educated at Aberdeen University, and studied medicine in Edinburgh. In 1788 he went to London and rapidly succeeded at the bar, becoming Recorder of Bombay from 1804 to 1812, and on his return a member of Parliament till his death. Mackintosh was more a man of affairs than an academic philosopher; but his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* (1791) is almost the only surviving answer to Burke's *Reflections;* his *Discourses on the Law of Nature and Nations* (1799) show the eloquence of the advocate; and his *Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy* (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1830) is in its dry way a classic. He was not a professed Benthamite; but he had most affinity with the Utilitarian school, and held that "the coincidence of virtue with utility may become perfect." There must have been an attraction about the man which is not apparent in his writings, for he was deeply loved by his friends. Always a sober thinker, he began by hailing the French Revolution, almost recanted in horror at the Reign of Terror, and gradually returned to the Liberal enthusiasms of his youth. He left various fragments on *The History of England*, honest and judicial if a little bloodless. His style is apt to be too like that of spoken advocacy, but he has many passages of clear masculine argument.

Hamilton.—Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856) was born in Glasgow, educated at Glasgow University and Balliol College, Oxford, and called to the Scottish bar in 1813. The direction of his life was determined by his appointment in 1836 as professor of logic and metaphysics in Edinburgh, where he remained till his death twenty years later. To the young Scottish student the study of metaphysics has always been attractive, and a teacher of Hamilton's vital and arresting personality was destined to colour the whole life of the nation. Ministers, doctors, lawyers, and schoolmasters carried his gospel into every quarter of the land. His lectures were hurriedly prepared, and their indifferent form cannot give us the measure of his effect as a professor. He had the brain of a mediæval schoolman, and rejoiced in meticulous differentiations. He published an elaborate edition of Reid's works (1849); *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature* (1852); and his *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* appeared posthumously between 1859 and 1861. He cannot be said to have left speculative work of lasting value, but he did much to popularize the study of philosophy and to introduce British readers to the great German thinkers.

Mill.—John Stuart Mill (1806–73) was born in London, the son of James Mill the historian, and, thanks to his *Autobiography* (1873), we know every detail of his busy life. Few books are so completely simple-minded and sincere. The precocity of his childhood was the direct consequence of his father's unique theories of education. Beginning Greek in his fourth year, from eight to thirteen his attentions were divided between conic sections and Newton, astronomy and fluxions, logic and political economy; and there does not appear to have been a moment of his

waking life given up to idleness or recreation. His appointment in 1823 to the examiner's office at the India House gave him a profession which allowed him ample leisure for his own work. From thirty-five to forty he owned and practically edited the *London Review*, soon incorporated with the *Westminster Review*, where he became the prophet of the philosophical Radicals. His *System of Logic* was published in 1842, and five years later appeared *The Principles of Political Economy*. Both volumes were epoch-making, and both remain classics, even though philosophy has not moved in the direction he anticipated.

It was Mill's peculiar distinction that, though severely scientific, he was always human and popular. He was animated by a genuine desire for the public good, and his later years were devoted to social service and political reform. Writings like *Liberty* (1859), *Representative Government* (1861), and *The Subjection of Women* (1869) were in effect topical pamphlets ; but in many ways they are the most perfect in form of his productions. Mill's was a mind of superlative honesty and of a conscientiousness which became a sort of ardour. Few writers have treated of topics so dry and of dogma so cold with anything approaching his sensitive freshness and glowing humanity. The periodical attacks of depression from which he suffered never clouded his work, and his austere rationalism cannot hide his tenderness towards mankind.

Darwin.—Charles Robert Darwin (1809–82), who was one of the greatest of all scientists, is included in a history of literature because of the profound effect of his writings, rather than for their intrinsic literary value. His mental and moral stature is so great that it would dignify writings of far less artistic worth. His first book, *The Journal of the Voyage in the "Beagle"* (1839), is a brilliant series of travel pictures. Twenty years later he published *The Origin of Species ; The Descent of Man* followed in 1871, and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872. His style aims at only one merit—lucidity, and in consequence he is rarely obscure ; but the intense concentration of his thought makes him frequently crabbed. Nevertheless he has many passages full of a sober grace.

Spencer.—Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) is the most widely known of the many writers who popularized the doctrine of evolution. Early in life he conceived the grandiose scheme of his *Synthetic Philosophy*, on which he faithfully laboured to the end. His aim was to provide a complete systematization of the sciences, and he had all the self-confidence and optimism of the mid-Victorian scientist. His *Social Statics* appeared in 1850, and five years later the first edition of his *Principles of Psychology*. *First Principles* came in 1862 ; followed by *Principles of Biology* (1864–7) ; *Principles of Psychology* (1870–2) ; *Principles of Sociology* (1876–96) ; and *Ethics* (1879–93). He also edited the huge encyclopædia known as *Descriptive Sociology*. Other works are *Education* (1861) and *The Study of Sociology* (1872).

The difficulty of compiling an encyclopædic philosophy in modern times is the

huge field which it must cover. For system it was necessary to have one guiding conception, and he found this in "evolution." His style rarely rises above the commonplace, and it is painfully monotonous; but on the whole it is lucid, and the arrangement is uniformly excellent. Spencer's mind is, indeed, more interesting than his actual system. A bleak cheerfulness sustained him, and, oddly enough for a naturalist, he had an abiding sense of religion, and the older he grew the more inclined was he to enlarge his sphere of the Unknowable. His reach, as was inevitable in a cosmic philosophy, exceeded his grasp; but there is a real grandeur about the largeness of his aims and the faithfulness with which he toiled at them.

Huxley.—Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95) is from the point of view of pure literature the most distinguished of the Victorian evolutionists. His chief works are *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863); *Lay Sermons* (1870); *Critiques and Addresses* (1873); *Science and Culture* (1881); and *Essays on Some Controverted Questions* (1892). A collected edition of his essays was published in nine volumes in 1893. He also issued in 1878 an excellent study of Hume. Huxley had nearly all the literary graces—clarity and grace of style, wit, imagination, and urbanity. He is the model controversialist, and his statement of problems can hardly be bettered. Like Spencer, he had only one aim, to be lucid; but in the attainment of this literary grace nearly all the others were added unto him.

Green.—Thomas Hill Green (1836–82) is the chief of that other school of the later century which sought its inspiration in the great German metaphysicians. He was a tutor at Balliol, and founded a school which for long set the tone of speculation at Oxford. His chief works were an edition of Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* (1874–5) and his *Prolegomena to Ethics* (1883). He waged a war on empiricism, which was on the whole successful; and before he died his methods of thought were the most fashionable in England. He was a man of the highest and purest character; but, though a better scholar, he wrote no better than Herbert Spencer, and his close argumentation, impressive as it is, is scarcely literature.

Caird.—His pupil, Edward Caird (1835–1908), who succeeded Jowett as Master of Balliol, had for long a great influence in Scotland, and expounded the new Hegelianism with much more charm and persuasiveness. Caird, however, wrote less to convince than to fortify in the faith, and his strongest characteristic is the religious ardour which he succeeded in importing into metaphysics.

Bradley.—Of the many English Hegelians by far the most original mind is that of Francis Herbert Bradley (born 1846). His *Ethical Studies* (1876), *Principles of Logic* (1883; new ed. 1922), and *Appearance and Reality* (1893) reveal an intellect of the first order of subtlety, which, while accepting generally the metaphysics of its school, gave them a new colour and application. As a controversialist he is

most formidable, and throughout his all too few books are scattered passages and phrases full of a startling imaginative power and a brilliant wit.

TEACHERS, ESSAYISTS, AND CRITICS

CARLYLE

Life.—Thomas Carlyle (1795–81), the son of a stonemason, was born at Ecclefechan, in Dumfriesshire. In after years it was his ambition to build as well as his father built, and his description of the old man's " bold flowing style " and his " words like arrows " exaggerated " for the sake chiefly of humorous effect " reveals the origin of what many assumed to be affectations in his own writings. Much of his thought and most of his prejudices came to him direct from his early home and family circle. Educated at a school in Annan, he went to the University of Edinburgh, and then taught mathematics for some time at Annan and Kirkcaldy. He had been destined for the Kirk ; at one period he studied law ; but at the age of twenty-three he discovered his vocation in literature. In 1826 he married Jane Baillie Welsh and spent six years on her small property at Craigenputtock, in the moors of Dumfriesshire. It was a happy marriage, though full of tempests. The Carlyles came to London and settled in Cheyne Row in 1834. There he remained for the rest of his days, though he visited France and Germany more than once for the purposes of his books.

Works.—In this chapter we are concerned with Carlyle's miscellaneous writings, apart from his specific historical works. *The Life of Schiller* was published in 1823–4. Then followed a decade of journalism, including the famous *Characteristics*, till the issue of *Sartor Resartus* (1833–4). His career as an historian opened with *The French Revolution* in 1837. The *Lectures on Heroes* were delivered in 1840, in which year *Chartism* was published. Three years later came *Past and Present*, and in 1850 *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. In 1850–1 appeared *The Life of John Sterling*, the most successful of his lighter works. In addition, he produced a mass of miscellaneous articles and reviews, which are reprinted in his collected essays.

Philosophy. — It is easier to make phrases about Carlyle's teaching than to expound it, for it was essentially unsystematic and more like a series of cries extorted from a troubled soul than the orderly work of a sedate philosopher. He was dominated throughout by one or two conceptions. The chief was the conception of authority ; he believed that Zeus governs and will always defeat Prometheus, and that in Zeus both might and right are united. Another was his hatred of logic-chopping and the whole domain of what philosophers know as the " intelligence." He was in violent opposition to " the age of reason " and the 18th century, and

sought truth in revelation on the mystic side of life rather than in pure argument. The spirit and will were to him of far greater importance than the intellect. Again, he had something of Burke's belief in the past. "The true Past departs not, nothing that was worthy in the Past departs; no Truth or Goodness realized by man ever dies, or can die." He disliked new raw things which had no ancestry. Finally, he believed profoundly in the influence of great men, as opposed to the dull unconscious movement of masses, and had a Coriolanus-like bias against that "People" which the philosophic Radicals idealized. He was a democrat in so far as he emphasized the moral possibilities of every human soul; but he had no respect for Everyman's brains. His politics were a strange mixture of Tory and Jacobin, and in his later years he pinned his faith to a wise aristocracy.

Such a creed inevitably led to violent and somewhat warped dogmas. In countering popular illusions he often established counter fallacies. Whatever his theme, the pivot or inspiration of Carlyle's philosophy was Force, mostly personified. He worshipped the Great Man. Virtue, for him, must always express itself in action. Turning his eye over the history of mankind he pounced upon the heroes of every age, flung over them the shining mantle of his imagination, and shouted for the world's applause. So eager was he to see the thing done and the world agape, that he appears almost indifferent to the manner of doing it. But there was no vulgarity in this hero worship. The rule of the masters of the world was mind-rule; in some cases, like Cromwell and Frederick, the kingdom might be material also, but in others it was not of this world. If Carlyle could cheer lustily, he could also ban with a will. He hated shams, and was never weary of declaiming against the hypocrite, the slave of convention, the herd-man following the crowd, the gig-man with his regard for respectability. In all this, while there is often truth and justice, there is apt to be much noisy falsehood. But on the other hand he was a true seer and read human souls by a sort of joyous instinct. He had a strange power of divination, and his visions were often those of a poet, with a deeper truth than the prose of the scientist. He waged implacable war against the comfortable utilitarianism of his epoch, and on the whole the world has decided that he was right. He was a very great teacher of democracy, for he enabled it to realize its pitfalls.

As Critic.—Carlyle's style is dealt with in the section on his historical work (p. 517), but here we may note his performances as a critic of literature. In this sphere he is at his best and at his worst. If a man's temper was not in tune with his own he would have none of him, and few great writers have been guilty of more shallow judgments. His prejudices, in which he gloried, made him grossly unfair to men like Scott, Wordsworth, and Keats, and no critical verdict of his can be accepted without a rigorous examination. But the greatest writers, like Goethe and Shakespeare, he can praise with insight and felicity, and few have written more justly of Burns and of Johnson.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

General Characteristics.—We must appreciate Ruskin as a thinker before it is pos-

John Ruskin.
(Photo by F. Hollyer.)

sible to do him justice as a writer. As he says himself, "no noble nor right style was ever yet founded but out of a sincere heart . . . nor was any great style ever

invented but by some man who meant what he said." [1] If this be true, it is useless to dismiss his art criticism as misleading and his treatment of economics as unpractical, while we praise him as a master of words and a great writer. No one ever protested more vehemently against the theory of art for art's sake: if Ruskin's influence is one of the most potent and vitalizing forces of the second half of the 19th century, it is so by reason of the sum total of his work and of his conception of life as a whole.

To him there are no water-tight compartments in life; whether in art, in thought, in morals, or in the workaday world, Ruskin maintains that "nothing can be beautiful which is not true." And by promoting the love of beauty, he seeks to promote the love of truth; the two aspects of his work cannot be separated, for to him they are one and indivisible. He says in *Fors Clavigera* (Letter 76), "The teaching of Art as I understand it, is the teaching of all things." Thus he shows, and in no narrow didactic spirit, the relation between art and ethics; he makes clear the connection between sociological work and morals, and points out that scientific economics are inevitably bound up with the reform of the individual. He holds that the separation of material from spiritual progress is for ever impossible; that increased industrial and social prosperity must go hand in hand with increased capacity and desire for an advance which is even more vital. "It is open, I repeat, to serious question . . . whether among national manufactures, that of Souls of good quality may not at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one?" In all the many forms of teaching which he undertook, this manufacture of souls, this awakening of the spiritual in the material, was his chief end and aim.

Early Life.—"The first step," he tells us, "to the understanding either the mind or position of a great man ought, I think, to be an inquiry into the elements of his early instruction, and the mode in which he was affected by the circumstances of surrounding life." John Ruskin was born of Scottish parentage in London, the son of a wine merchant. His mother was sternly evangelical, and trained her only son in the strictest Sabbatarianism, giving him also an exact and detailed knowledge of the Bible. The lives of the parents centred in their son, who was shielded, cared for, guarded, but allowed little or no freedom or intercourse with boys of his own age. He was taught at home, and the only breaks in a very quiet childhood were the long journeys in England, Scotland, and on the Continent, which gave him what was best in his education, stimulating and guiding his taste and his appreciation of the beautiful in nature and in art. Later on he was at Christ Church, Oxford, and won the Newdigate. Meanwhile he had, from the age of thirteen onwards, been a lover of Turner's paintings; in 1840 he was introduced to "the man who beyond all doubt is the greatest of the age." The hero-worship Turner inspired, the publication of Carlyle's *Heroes*, and the influence of his own studies in drawing both in England and in the Alps, finally decided Ruskin's work

[1] *Lectures on Art*, III., 68.

in life. He determined to be an art critic; in the words of Mr. Collingwood, "the mission was laid upon him to tell the world that Art, no less than other spheres of life, had its Heroes; that the mainspring of their energy was Sincerity, and the burden of their utterance, Truth."

Works.—In May 1843 Ruskin published the first volume of *Modern Painters*, and from that time until 1860, when he finished that work, he took art as the starting-point for all his writings. Ruskin's art criticism is vital, not formal; it deals with almost every aspect of existence as well as of art; and everywhere it brings art to the test of life. He came to hold that a nation's art is the expression of its life and character, and that if these are impure, the resulting art will be, like the Renaissance architecture of Venice, decadent and impure. For "the art of any country is the exponent of its social and political virtues . . . an exact exponent of its ethical life." [1]

From this position there was no very startling transition to the final phase of Ruskin's work, and that which, in his own opinion, was by far the most important. From teaching art he passed to the economic and social problems which occupied the rest of his life. He had come to realize that social evils went too deep for philanthropic tinkering. He therefore set himself the task of planning a complete scheme for social reorganization—a scheme which aims at the banishment of utilitarianism and materialism, and at substituting for them the beauty which is also justice and truth.

> Unless you are minded to bring yourselves and all whom you can help out of this curse of darkness, you need not try to do any art work; it is the vainest of affectations to try to put beauty into shadows, while all the real things that cast them are left in deformity and pain.

Ruskin's political economy, like his art criticism, is often condemned, and we are told, doubtless with justice, that many of his plans would fail, even if an attempt were made to put them into practice. Yet, concerning the principles themselves, there can be only one opinion. He struck at the very root of modern life, and at the struggle for the miscalled "wealth" of mere possessions. He showed that the quality of life which a man leads is the only real criterion; that injurious competition and money-grabbing are opposed to civic and social welfare. Things which cannot be bought and sold—love, friendship, self-sacrifice, capacity, truth—do nevertheless and must inevitably have a very real influence even on supply and demand. Consequently, even from the lowest point of view, the greatest material results are obtained when service is gladly rendered. To treat a worker as a machine —*i.e.* as something less than a man—is to lower the economic value of his work. If this be "sentiment," it is sentiment of a very reasonable and practical kind.

The same is true of many of the other contentions of Ruskin, in all of which he substitutes a human life standard for a money standard: many of them are now accepted even by the most hard-headed business men—*e.g.* the doctrine that in the

[1] *Lectures on Art.*

long run it is more profitable to pay a higher wage to an efficient, than a lower wage to a less efficient, workman.

Style.—Ruskin clothed his thought in language of exceptional beauty. In his early work his style is peculiarly rich, full of imagery, metaphor, and illustration. His language is an exact reflex of his patient observation of fact, and he piles up picture upon picture, each detail in which is vivid and true, in an English which is full of harmony and colour, flexible, impassioned, imaginative, and clear. An example of this method is the famous description of the Campagna in Vol. I. of *Modern Painters* (Part II., chap. ii., sect. 1) :

> The noonday sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and their masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it colour, it was conflagration. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life ; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald.

On the other hand, the language is sometimes so ornate as to conceal, rather than to illustrate, the central thought. It calls attention to itself at the expense of the argument : it captivates and seduces the imagination by a wealth that degenerates into luxury. The sentences, with their parallel clauses and many comparisons, become too long, and are overloaded so that the illustrations are but an added obscurity. Thus in *Modern Painters* (Vol. II., Part III., chap. xv., sect. 1) there is a sentence which contains more than six hundred words and eighty stops ; this is exceptional, but many sentences extend to several hundred words. It is not surprising that such writing lacks spontaneity, and even appears affected.

In his sociological writings, almost all of which were originally intended to be spoken, not printed, the style is quite different and very much simpler. The long period of earlier days, with its many clauses, is divided into brief sentences, alive with passion and vision. Even when Ruskin utters the maxims and aphorisms of a moralist, these are quickened by the intensity of emotion that inspires them. He speaks like a Hebrew prophet, using often enough the very words, and still more often the tone, of the English Bible, which had been familiar to him from his childhood. There are still at times the faults of confusion, word-play, and lack of clearness ; but the style is never cold, over-methodical, or laboured.

NEWMAN

Life.—John Henry Newman (1801–90) was born in London of a Cambridgeshire family. He went to Oxford at sixteen, and his mental development was slow till after his election to a Fellowship at Oriel in 1822. There he found Keble, Pusey, and Hurrell Froude, and with them inaugurated the Oxford Movement. If the cele-

brated *Tracts for the Times* (1833–41) do not express a philosophy widely accepted to-day, their influence upon the history of Anglican thought was far-reaching, and it was Newman who gave to the movement spiritual vitality. He wrote nearly one-third of the ninety tracts, besides various works in apologetic theology. His *Oxford Sermons* (1828–53) filled eight volumes. Gradually he found himself unable to recognize any *via media* between Atheism and Catholicism; in 1845 he joined the Roman Church, and in 1878 became a cardinal. In the exposition and defence of the Roman doctrine he was no less eloquent and persuasive than in his Anglican days, though his sermons became notably less balanced and classic in form. But his *Idea of a University* (1854) contains some of his finest prose, and his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864) is famous not only for its controversial subtlety, but for its moral and spiritual beauty and its literary grace.

Cardinal Newman.

Characteristics.—The Oxford Movement came into being as a protest against the Victorian spirit of compromise. To its members dogma, as such, appealed far more powerfully than any particular dogma; they were determined to see where the faith, which most people professed, really led them, and they believed profoundly in the eternal significance of the conflict between good and evil. For the movement Newman wrote poems in the *Lyra Apostolica* (1832–3); the *Sermons* and *Tracts* already mentioned; *The Prophetical Office of the Church* (1837); *Lectures on Justification* (1838), and an *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). Here is to be found "religious music—subtle, sweet, mournful." In the *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (1850), the *Lectures upon Anglican Difficulties* (1850), and the *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870), his fervour occasionally seems forced and his style over-elaborate. In his early days Newman declared that he "meant to be hot-headed," and, like the older saints, he could always "get into one of St. Columba's grand wrath-explosions." His two novels, *Loss and Gain* (1848) and *Callista* (1856), are dis-

appointing; but *The Dream of Gerontius* (1865) proved that he had the metrical accomplishments as well as the spirit of the poet.

Style.—He has told us that he had "to take great pains with everything," and often wrote chapters many times and made innumerable corrections, not in an attempt to write well, or to form an eloquent style, but "with the one single desire and aim to explain clearly and exactly his meaning." In most of his writing there is no sense of effort: everything seems transparent and spontaneous. He is a master of simple and beautiful cadences. This is his description of a gentleman:

> He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions and topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring.

Newman was a great influence, both upon English style and upon the modes, and even the substance, of English thought. His was the power of an intense personal piety and a rare, subtle, and deeply imaginative mind. Even when his arguments seem Jesuitical or crudely declamatory they are relieved the next instant by some touch of honesty or humour or wise simplicity, so that men who differ most widely from his conclusions can rejoice in the atmosphere of sincere faith and high spiritual endeavour.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

"Essays in Criticism"—the Doctrine of Culture.—Like many writers of the first rank, Arnold began life as a poet, and settled down at maturity to the production of critical and philosophical prose. In 1865 his *Essays in Criticism* inaugurated his remarkable influence upon students of literature and first attracted the attention of the public. The book determined his life-work, which was to produce what might be called a Bible of Culture. He wrote on literature and religion, on politics and ethics, in a spirit which was a curious compound of the scholar and the missionary. Actually he achieved much towards the standardization of taste, and towards introducing historical and scientific methods of criticism to English readers. Always openly ironical towards the middle classes and what he called Philistinism, he yet wrote more for men of the world than for scholars, and, by virtue of the arresting novelty of his thought and style, did really awaken the ordinary man to some conception of art and some questioning upon religion and morality. Though never governed by practical considerations, his judgment was always practical, and he was inspired with an ardent desire for the intellectual upraising of his fellow-countrymen. The prosperous complacency, the mental indolence, and the hustling efficiency of the average Victorian were the subjects of his urbane ridicule. Superficially a bundle of contradictions—gibing at academic

routine with all the polish of the academics; a Liberal who scorned the vulgar majority; lightly satirizing the Churches while labouring his own gospel of sweetness and light; denying all tradition or dogma which could not be intellectually justified—there lay behind this elegant persiflage and studied worldliness a strong undercurrent of serious intention. He cared profoundly about truth and beauty. He deeply admired moral sanity, and he earnestly laboured to improve mankind. The jaunty manner of his rebuke was natural and spontaneous, and was probably the most efficient instrument for his purpose. He never encouraged a mere dalliance among the fields of art, and demanded from himself and his readers the hardest mental toil. His love of the classics gave him a certain severity. The critic, he tells us, must "endeavour in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is."

Prose Works.—There is in reality no marked distinction to be made between the various groups of subjects upon which he wrote. The two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* (1855 and 1888), parts of *Mixed Essays* (1879), and *Discourses in America* (1885) belong more exclusively to literature, while *On Translating Homer* (1861–2) and *Celtic Literature* (1867) were lectures delivered during the tenure of his Oxford professorship. The social-political group began with the *English and Italian Question* (1859), followed by *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), which, with *Friendship's Garland* (1871), is perhaps his most characteristic work. *Irish Essays* appeared in 1882. *Literature and Dogma* (1873) aroused more opposition and more applause than any of his other writings on religion, which include *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *God and the Bible* (1875), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877).

As Critic.—Arnold was a man of sound and wide scholarship, and his mental powers, by assiduous training, had been sharpened into a most delicate instrument. He held before him a very high and arduous ideal—in his phrase, "the law of pure and flawless workmanship"—and he is perpetually endeavouring to fix a canon of judgment. This canon is less a philosophy than a number of touchstones, which after all bring the test of good work back to the direct appreciation of the man of culture. His use of such touchstones was not always skilful, and he was apt to repeat the phrases till they became a little worn and lack-lustre; but behind all his judgments, whether on literature, ethics, or religion, there is a broad and sterling sanity and catholicity. He represents the best results of classical scholarship grafted on a northern temperament. He was a master, too, of striking phrases, and more than any other writer of his time provided the world with a critical vocabulary. Sometimes, as in the case of Shelley, he is freakishly unjust, because he was always more than a critic. Unlike Sainte-Beuve, he felt himself a preacher with a mission, and was inclined to exaggerate the merits of those writers whose gospel harmonized with his own. He was always the son of his father and the child of Victorian Oxford, and for all his urbanity could fulminate in the prophetic style against his antipathies

He was essentially English, and his occasionally wicked wit did not offend his countrymen, who saw in him the " fundamental righteousness " which at the back of their heads they admired.

Style.—The chief features of his writing are grace and lucidity ; at his best he produced nearly perfect prose. He had few obvious mannerisms, but at the same time his style is intensely individual, an exact expression of a rare and original personality. Even in passages of pure argument there is a kind of sober sheen about it. Sometimes, as in the famous passage on Oxford, it can fall into haunting rhythms and glow with the fresh colours of a spring morning.

OTHER WRITERS

Bagehot.—Walter Bagehot (1826–77) was a banker and economist. He produced in *Lombard Street* (1873) an excellent introduction to finance, in his *English Constitution* (1865–7) a brilliant analysis of the balance of power in the British Government, and in his *Physics and Politics* (1869) a discussion of one side of the evolutionary theory. His best work, however, is to be found in his literary and biographical studies, which appeared as magazine articles during his life. Bagehot excels in luminous common sense and in analytic power. He is most catholic in temper, and is as much at home with the mystics as with the typical English statesman. Few men have written more wisely and rightly on Shakespeare and Scott, and on such disparate figures as Gladstone and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Walter Bagehot.

Dr. John Brown.—Dr. John Brown (1810–82) was born at Biggar, in Lanarkshire, the son of a Scottish minister. He was educated at the High School and at the University of Edinburgh, and graduated as a doctor in 1833. The rest of his life was spent quietly in his practice in the northern capital among a congenial circle of friends. His charming *Letters* (1907) contain the record of a *fallentis semita vitæ*. He had known Scott and Jeffrey and Christopher North, and formed an interesting link between the past and the present. Brown was essentially a miscellanist, and is in many respects a Scottish Charles Lamb. He is homely and unconventional, playful and discursive, at once modest and egotistical. He had the profound religious sense of his countrymen, a deep and

kindly humour, great charm of personality, and a curious gaiety of style. Beginning with papers on professional subjects, his first collection of miscellaneous essays, *Horæ Subsecivæ*, published in 1858, was followed by two similar collections. In them will be found, as in Sir Thomas Browne, the confession of faith of a wise physician, much sound literary criticism, and one or two papers which stand in a class by themselves, and on which his reputation chiefly depends. The immortal *Rab and his Friends* appeared in the first volume, the story of a big mastiff, a carrier, and his invalid wife. *Our Dogs* is a wonderful study of canine character, the best in our literature. *Marjorie Fleming*, the story of a child whom he had known in his youth, is in itself sufficient to vindicate his fame. For delicacy, humour, and pathos these three essays have rarely been equalled. Brown was one of those happy people who could attain to almost perfect form without apparent effort. He is a good writer without any painful searching after the apposite word, and a delightful personality without a trace of self-consciousness.

Stephen.—Sir Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) was for eleven years editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and one of the principal editors of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He wrote on philosophy—*English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876), *The Science of Ethics* (1882), and *The English Utilitarians* (1900). But his best work was done as a critic. His essays are reprinted in *Hours in a Library* (1874–9) and *Studies of a Biographer* (1898), and he also published short *Lives* of Johnson, Pope, Swift, and Hobbes. Stephen belonged more or less to the school of Herbert Spencer, but in his literary work he was signally free from any bias. Less original than Bagehot, he provides careful and balanced estimates of his subjects; his lines are always clear, and now and then the picture is warm in human colour. His style is workmanlike, and there is often an agreeable tartness in it. He is a true agnostic, and is very chary of dogmatizing. His *Playground of Europe* (1871), one of the classics of mountaineering, shows a Wordsworthian passion in its joy in natural beauty.

Morley.—John Morley, Lord Morley of Blackburn (born 1838), is the most notable of the later disciples of Mill, though he derived from his master chiefly his austere intellectual conscience and his passion for the doctrines of Liberalism. A long life of journalism and political service did not prevent him from publishing a certain number of literary biographies which stand high among their kind. Such were his *Burke* (1867 and 1879); *Voltaire* (1871); *Rousseau* (1873); *Diderot* (1878); *Studies in Literature* (1891); *Miscellanies* (fourth series, 1908). He has also written *Lives* of Richard Cobden (1881), Walpole (1889), Cromwell (1900), and Gladstone (1903), and one philosophical treatise *On Compromise* (1874). Lord Morley is as severe a moral critic as Carlyle, and writes sometimes with much of Carlyle's passion. He is a master of weighty, masculine prose, a little stiff-jointed

and not always free from splashes of irrelevant colour. His wide learning enables him to set his subjects in clear relation to their contemporary world, and he has rarely been excelled in one kind of literary portraiture. Like many other members of the rationalistic school, he is temperate and reverent in the face of the mysteries of life, and rarely dogmatizes except in his criticism of dogma.

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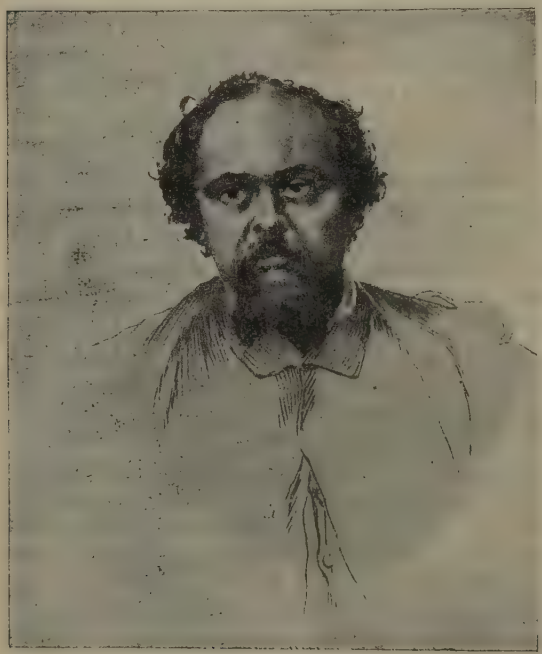
Chapter 9. LATER VICTORIAN POETS

The Rossettis—William Morris—Swinburne—Robert Bridges

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828–82)

Life.—The influence of Rossetti's parentage and surroundings is strongly marked in his work. His father was an Italian refugee, who settled in London in 1821; a great student of Dante, a mystic and believer in spiritual things, though, in the common usage of the term, a free-thinker. Mrs. Rossetti, who had "a passion for intellect," had enormous influence on the minds of her children, all four of whom were unusually gifted. Dante Gabriel, the elder son, early showed his talents both as artist and poet. He became an art student at the age of fifteen, and before he was nineteen he had already composed two of his best-known poems—both published a few years later (1850) in the *Germ*—*The Blessed Damozel* and *My Sister's Sleep*. As a founder of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, though in many respects he stands outside the movement, Rossetti was closely connected not only with Holman Hunt and Millais, but also with most of the thoughtful young artists of the day. On these, and on a host of other men, including Ruskin, who was not easily influenced by the opinions of others, he exerted extraordinary influence and fascination. This power of attraction must be taken into account in any estimate of Rossetti.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Character.—Rossetti was beloved by his friends, who held that he was greater

than his works, and this in spite of his moodiness, self-will, and, in later years, the morbid melancholy that grew on him when ill-health and drug-taking ruined his temper and his genius. His marriage lasted but two years, and had a sad ending. Though it followed a courtship of nine years it was not altogether happy —the poet's domestic habits did not make for comfort in the little things that count for so much in daily life. Mrs. Rossetti died from an overdose of laudanum in 1862; and in the violence of his grief, Rossetti buried his unpublished poems in her coffin. Seven years later the grave was opened in order that they might be recovered.

Characteristics.—Rossetti came to maturity as a poet far earlier than as a painter; but whatever his mode of expression, he was the exponent of similar ideas. In *Hand and Soul*, a prose allegory, he sets before us in symbolical language that which we may regard as the ideal of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood—"Manus animam pinxit," "the hand is to paint the soul." He himself is always conscious of the immanence of the divine and spiritual, anxious to serve humanity with hand and soul, and to give joy by the revelation of the beauty that is everywhere and in each, not by glossing over the ugly which is but as a veil to be penetrated, but "remembering that when the winter is striven through, there is another year, whose wind is meek and whose sun fulfilleth all." The great interest of Rossetti's work, pictorial and poetical, lies precisely in the complete blending of mysticism and sensuous enjoyment; mysticism as spiritual as that of mediæval ascetics, which nevertheless wholly rejects the asceticism that exalts the spirit at the expense of the body. He had no interest in external nature, in science, sociology, or philosophy—in anything but the beauty that he found best expressed in the human, especially the female form, which symbolized for him the principle he was continually seeking. For him, Beauty stood for the united body and soul, united so completely that

> Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
> Thee from myself, neither our love from God.—*House of Life*, V.

Thus love was transformed into a mystical, spiritual passion—redeemed almost wholly from the "fleshly" sensuousness of which Rossetti was wrongfully accused. As Pater says:

> For Rossetti, then, the great affections of persons to each other, swayed and determined, in the case of his highly pictorial genius, mainly by that so-called material loveliness, formed the great, undeniable reality in things, the solid resisting substance, in a world where all beside might be but shadow.

Works.—*The Blessed Damozel*, one of Rossetti's earliest poems, even in the first version shows as well as anything he has written the strange ardent blending of the spiritual and sensuous in his mind. "The Blessed Damozel" transported to the rampart of God's house, in communion with Virgin and angels, able to see the prayers that mount to heaven, gifted with vision beyond the human sense of time

and space, is nevertheless depicted with very real human beauty and human characteristics :

her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm.

Perhaps the *House of Life* sonnets—*life*, not *love*, for to Rossetti the two are identical—best illustrate what F. W. H. Myers called Rossetti's " religion of beauty." The sequence of sonnets unfolds no connected story, nor even a development of emotional experience, but it makes the nearest approach to a philosophy of life to be found anywhere in the poet's work. It contains a detailed record of sensations, emotions, spiritual experiences, of love's joys and sorrows—a record, that is, of what for Rossetti is literally all that is essential and permanent in the life spiritual of love and hope. More characteristic and more moving is *The Portrait*, a longer poem on the picture which he had once painted of his wife.

And as I wrought, while all above
And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
In that one darkness lying still,
What now to thee my love's great will,
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves ?
. . . . . .
Here with her face doth memory sit
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer :
While hopes and aims long lost with her
Stand round her image side by side,
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre.

Rossetti's ballads, of which the chief are *Rose Mary*, *The White Ship*, *The King's Tragedy*, *Sister Helen*, *Stratton Water*, *The Staff and Scrip*, are of two kinds, those in which he admits the supernatural element and those in which it is excluded. The poet had a consistent belief in the reality of the unseen ; he belonged naturally, and not artificially, to the world of romance. Consequently his ballads reproduce convincingly the atmosphere which he breathed so easily. He was conscious of the weird and the mysterious, inexplicable factors in life and nature, and he painted them, whether in colours or words, without any effort, in a way which compels that momentary suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith. In *Rose Mary* perhaps more than anywhere else we realize how natural the supernatural was to Rossetti ; it required no effort of the imagination ; it was a reality, as life and love were realities. Throughout the ballads the situations are strong in conception and rendering ; the poet is imaginatively convinced of their truth, and by his imagination contrives also to convince the reader.

One other aspect of Rossetti's work, different from anything we should expect to find, must be mentioned. Pater, in his admirable essay on Rossetti's poetry, calls attention to the severity of thought underlying even his fantastic poems. He illustrates this quality by reference to *The Burden of Nineveh*, a poem enthusiastically praised by Ruskin and Swinburne. Here, as in the ballads of action, and *Dante in Verona*, Rossetti is absolutely direct and simple in statement. Without this sober quality, his works would be less interesting to the world.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI (1830–94)

Characteristics.—Christina Rossetti is perhaps the greatest English poetess. Her work is much smaller in bulk than that of Mrs. Browning, and far less ambitious in scope. Except in her devotional and supernatural poems, she never steps beyond the bounds of her own experience to find subject-matter for her poetry, and her knowledge of the world is deep rather than wide.

Christina Georgina Rossetti.
(From the portrait by D. G. Rossetti.)

Christina Rossetti is content to embody her thoughts in simple, unexaggerated, homely language, even when she expresses subtle and unusual conceptions or mystical intuitions. Her poetry is the perfect expression of her simple personality. Her somewhat gloomy view of life did not in the least blind her to the beauty of the world. She was profoundly impressed by the mysteries of religion, and her unquestioning faith in the tenets of her Church is in striking contrast to the scepticism of the age. Her religion was in some ways narrow, but it was markedly tolerant, and as sincere as everything else about her. It regulated her whole life and conception of duty even in the minutest details; it led her to reject both the offers of marriage which she received; it made her, in her later years, almost as much a recluse as the sister who entered a Protestant sisterhood. But it never made her harsh with unbelievers, nor led her to anything but love and charity.

> The notes that rippled, wave on wave,
> Were clear as love, as faith were strong,

says Swinburne of her in his *Ballad of Appeal*. Love and faith inspired her life and her poetry.

Works.—Her first poems, like her brother's, appeared in the ill-fated but now famous *Germ ;* and she scarcely improved on these early efforts—e.g., *Dream Land* and *A Testimony*. Her first published volumes of 1862 and 1866 contained the two most striking poems which introduce the supernatural element, viz. *Goblin Market* and *The Prince's Progress*. The first of these is a poem of pure fantasy, absolutely naïve and with no didactic intention ; the second is allegorical, though the moral is not ostentatiously enforced. The original nucleus of the poem was the beautiful dirge at the end : " Too late for love, too late for joy."

It seems natural to pass from *The Prince's Progress* to those poems which are more directly love poems. Of these the most beautiful are the fourteen *Monna Innominata* sonnets, which are professedly spoken by a lady who inspired one of Dante's little-known predecessors. The disguise scarcely veils the expression of the writer's feelings, and there is little doubt that she is immortalizing her own experiences. The poems are intensely personal, and help us to realize what was entailed by her sacrifice to her conscientious scruples. Perhaps the finest are Nos. 5 and 12, but it is difficult to choose, when all are great in thought, feeling, and technique. " My heart is like a singing bird " is a love poem of a different type ; one which is pre-eminently glad, without a trace of gloom or introspection.

The larger part of Christina Rossetti's poetry is devotional, and she is one of the great religious poets in English. Her sacred poetry continually recalls the quaint symbolism and illustrations of the 17th-century religious poets ; her direct, simple way of addressing the Deity is unusual in modern writers. She takes a melancholy view of life ; her theme is often " vanity of vanities " ; she is frequently in the throes of spiritual conflict, and occasionally there is even a tragic note in her music. She rises sometimes, as in *The Convent Threshold*, to the heights of ascetic passion, but she is not really an ascetic. The joys of the world beckon to and tempt her ; she hears their call though she resists it. This is clearly seen in what is probably her masterpiece, *Amor Mundi*, a religious allegory, which for lyric beauty and strength of imagination challenges comparison with the finest love poems in the language. Yet its solemnity and fervour, its strength of treatment and conception, place it on a different plane from poems which express purely personal emotion.

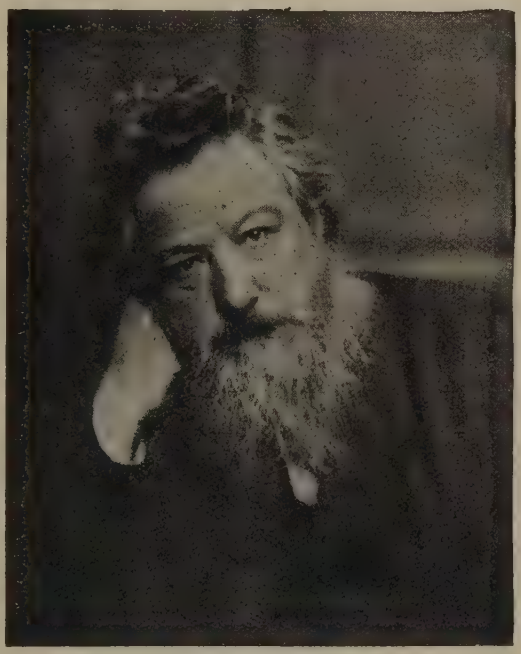
Style.—Christina Rossetti's poems suffer at times from what has been called " uncertainty of touch," vague and ambiguous versification, yet the prevailing impression is that of finish, ease, and melody. At her best, her phrasing, choice of words, and perfection of rhythm are unsurpassable.

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me ;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree :

Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–96)

Characteristics.—It is not possible, even in a history of literature, to deal with William Morris, man-of-letters, and to ignore the other aspects of his work. In the first place, his personality was so dominating and so influential, and at the same time so attractive and lovable, that only in knowing it can we hope to understand his manifold interests and undertakings. Secondly, he was architect, poet, painter, house-decorator, weaver, dyer, printer, tradesman, politician, stump-orator, and militant Socialist, but this versatility implied just the opposite of diffuseness or unsteadiness of purpose. Each new undertaking was the direct outcome of that which had preceded; none was relinquished because of the new effort. Nor is it true that Morris was Jack-of-all-trades and master of none. He achieved his ambition to deserve the title "master-artisan," and achieved it, as he would have wished, by his realization of the unity of life and progress, and art and beauty.



William Morris.
(Photo by F. Hollyer.)

Theory of Art.—Morris's theory of art, like that of his master Ruskin, and of Ruskin's master Carlyle, was a theory of life with a very practical bearing on its conduct. In Morris's *Lectures on Art* the relationship with Ruskin is strongly marked and emphasized by himself, and it is there we find the key to his position in his own words: "That thing which I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe man can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness." In another place (*The Lesser Arts*) he adds

significantly: "I believe there is nothing that will aid the world's progress as much as this . . . wrapped up, as I am sure it is, with changes political and social, that in one way or another we all desire." It is not difficult to find the link between this statement and Morris's later socialistic propaganda. Morris believed that all creative work, whatever the kind, ought to be artistic, in the sense that it produces the pleasure that comes from the healthy exercise of man's energies, and that it appeals "to his emotions and his intellect by means of his senses." He held that the spiritual element which results in quality gradually disappears when this is not the case: and that when no pleasure is taken in the work it cannot be rightly done. "A progress which puts art on one side will tend towards the intellectual death of the human race."

Phases of Work.—This summary of Morris's views about art explains the different phases of his work, which are all due to his efforts to beautify life—not his own life, but the lives of all. To him the greatest happiness is happy work, and the greatest sin, the sin against beauty of life, thought, or natural surroundings. If he preaches revolutionary Socialism, that is because beauty of life is impossible in society as he knows it, and it is necessary to change those conditions which are ugly and therefore hateful. If, in his impossible but golden *Land of Nowhere*, he finds small place for literature and poetry, that is because he thinks such joys essential only in a world where the ugliness of facts is so overwhelming that some way of escape from them is necessary.

Poetry.—Morris's first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858), was the earliest public manifesto in what is sometimes called the second romantic revival, of which he and Rossetti were the leaders. These men were attracted to mediæval sources as were their predecessors in the beginning of the 19th century, but they used them in a new and far more scholarly way. Certain of their poems have marked affinities with those of Coleridge and Keats, and succeed in reproducing once more the charm of mystery and supernaturalism. But, over and above these more general attempts to revive the atmosphere and spirit of the Middle Ages, there are specialized studies of the temper, sentiments, and modes of thought of earlier times. Morris, in his first volume, goes straight to the heart and soul of the 13th and 14th centuries, which were his abiding delight. Even the great Norse epic did not alter his first love for the Arthurian legend, for Malory, and for the days of Froissart. Morris seems instinctively to understand the mediæval standpoint: he does not imitate old writers; he enters into their very spirit, and reproduces their mood because it has become his own. He, too, is attracted by the mysterious, the mystical, and unknown: he has felt that thrill of awe in the presence of natural phenomena which is of the very essence of "romance"; he has inborn affinities with the old childlike reverence and wonder. In his poems, as in his prose romances, he sometimes creates the peculiar atmosphere which accustoms us to

strange happenings (compare, for example, *The Blue Closet*, *The Sailing of the Sword*, *Two Red Roses across the Moon*). But at the same time, he fully understands the brutal, savage element in the Middle Ages, and is under no delusions about it. One need read only *The King's Dream* to see that he is no believer in a past golden age of prosperity and bliss. In such poems as *The Haystack in the Floods*, *Shameful Death*, or *Sir Peter Harpdon's End*—full of tragic incident, and far removed from the gentle, debonair spirit of romance—Morris goes to the grim truth of primitive times. Similarly, the four chief Arthurian poems in the volume are brilliant studies of incident and passion, in which, as everywhere in his writing, Morris seems to see the scenes he depicts. His poems are pictures, wonderfully distinct in their presentation: he realizes absolutely a situation, scene, mood, or feeling, and paints it definitely and conclusively in verse. In his later work Morris sometimes sacrifices action to pictorial decoration; in *The Defence of Guenevere* there is real dramatic movement. On the other hand, the faults of the volume, ruggedness of form and occasional obscurity of expression, are entirely different from anything in his later work.

In *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1865–70), and *Love is Enough* (1873), there is a smooth flow of narrative, even, self-contained, and somewhat diffuse, which produces the effect of monotony, but can hardly be said to lose by it. Morris loved his work, and never tried to condense it. He poured forth his verses and romances apparently without effort, and while he was immersed in all kinds of other occupation.

The Earthly Paradise and *The Life and Death of Jason*, which was originally intended to form one of its stories, are purely narrative in conception and treatment. Both works contain a memorable envoy to Chaucer, the master "great of heart and tongue," with whom Morris has some affinity. He possesses, like his "original," the sense of narrative proportion and the gift of story-telling. The framework of *The Earthly Paradise* is so constructed that Morris can draw from all the greatest stories of the world—classical, mediæval, northern, and eastern—and can put them all alike into mediæval dress. He preferred the detailed mediæval manner to all others; he disliked an ambitious, formal mode of presentation, which, as he thought, interfered with the direct imaginative effect of poetry. Morris is never in a hurry: he has time to introduce the beautiful pictures and vivid detailed descriptions in which he excels. The decorative work is all admirable; but we are not meant to know much more than the outside of the characters. *The Earthly Paradise* is long as a whole (some 40,000 lines), and so are some of the separate stories. The workmanship is uniform, the flow of narrative unruffled; it is only in *The Lovers of Gudrun* that it rises to the note of tragic passion. In *Jason*, on the other hand, Morris shows real power of handling a tragic situation imaginatively and with conviction.

Love is Enough is a finely constructed mystery play, one scene lying constantly within another. *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) is his most ambitious version of Scandi-

navian legend. It shows great breadth and strength of treatment, and nobly reproduces the human interest and wild spirit of Norse poetry. Here are the austere passion and sublime striving of the northern sagas: the warriors who face life boldly and uncompromisingly.

> But if nor Christ nor Odin help, why then
> Still at the worst are we the sons of men.

That is Morris's summing up of the heroic outlook in *Sigurd*, and it is also the expression of one of his own feelings about the human life he loved. "Sometimes we must needs think that we shall live again; yet if that were not, would it not be enough that we helped to make this unnameable glory and lived not altogether deedless?"

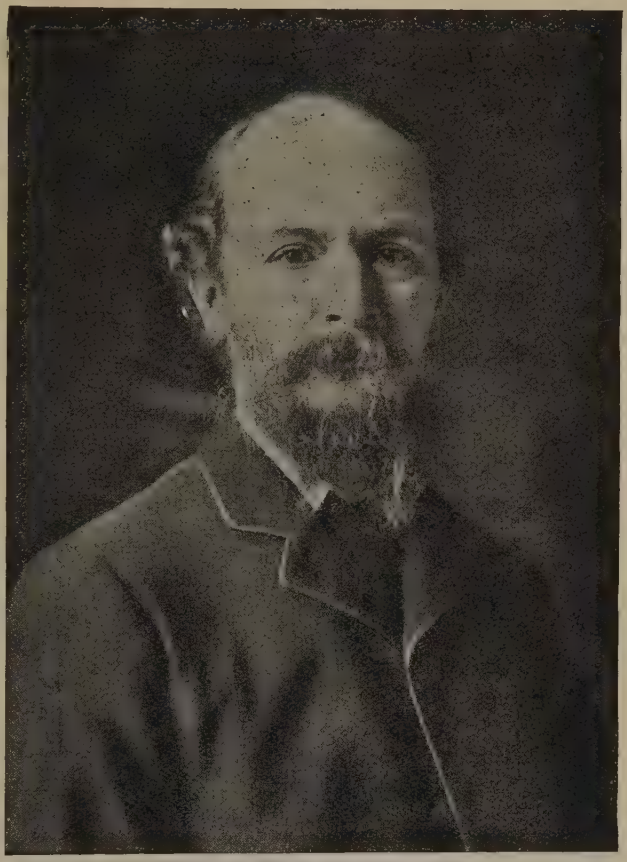
Prose.—Morris's translations of the *Æneid*, the *Odyssey*, and of *Beowulf* can be no more than mentioned, but a word must be said of his prose, for no one can understand the spirit of his poetry who has not also read most of his other writings. *News from Nowhere* and *A Dream of John Ball* are the "Socialist romances" that correspond to the more sober, but in their own way quite as revolutionary, *Lectures on Art*. The early tales, and the romances pure and simple, though the setting is in a sense mediæval, belong to no recognized period of the Middle Ages and to no known country. But they all glow with the imaginative beauty which is hardly ever absent from Morris's work; and one of the earliest, *The Hollow Land*, is a fantasy of sound and colour which can hardly be paralleled in English.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909)

Life.—Swinburne was drawn by his training to classic literature, to which he was naturally attracted, apart from his Eton and Oxford education. He left Balliol without taking a degree, but he owed to Oxford his acquaintance with Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and William Morris, by the first of whom, especially, he was greatly influenced. Soon after leaving the University he travelled in Italy, and it was there that the memorable meeting between the youngest and the oldest singer, Swinburne and Landor, took place. They had in common their love of the classics and their rebelliousness, and Swinburne never ceased to admire Landor and to praise his works, though these have little resemblance to his own. Swinburne's love for the classics did not result in the usual restraining effects produced by their study. Neither his admiration for Landor nor his knowledge of Greek gave his poetry the balance and clearness which distinguish great classical art.

Literary Influences.—His verse shows traces of other than Greek influence. He was intimately acquainted with French and with Italian literature, from both

of which he learned much, and his writings are everywhere enriched by his genuine scholarship and by his wonderful memory of what he had read in many languages. Thus he loves to make experiments in verse-forms borrowed from Provençal, French, and Italian — the sestina, ballade, and rondel, for example. He draws many of these forms and some of his subjects from the Middle Ages; he delights in Elizabethan drama; he writes some of his greatest work—*Atalanta, Erechtheus* —in the form of classical tragedy, and he uses with unrivalled skill the dactyls and anapæsts which are a stumbling-block to most of his countrymen. To study Swinburne's metres in detail would be a lengthy process, but it would prove the enormous range from which he selected his instruments and his great technical skill in their management.



Algernon Charles Swinburne.

A man so easily swayed by his passions and by his imagination as Swinburne was inevitably moved to enthusiasm on behalf of great causes, and also to ecstasies of hero-worship. It must be admitted that his chosen heroes—Shelley, Landor, Mazzini, Kossuth, Victor Hugo—were worthy of his admiration, and that he devoted his energies to the cause of freedom for nations and for individuals. It is difficult to disentangle the purely literary from the political attraction, for the two are almost invariably combined. Of English poets, Shelley exercised perhaps the greatest influence over the younger writer.

Views.—Swinburne had what was, for him, the good fortune to live in a period when he could have the satisfaction of attacking definite abuses, such as the Austrian

oppression of Italy, slavery in the United States, and the like. One of his finest political poems is that addressed to Mazzini, in which he describes how the various Italian cities rejoice at Italy's newborn freedom; and all his Italian poems are great. Yet we feel sometimes that his apostrophes to liberty are a little too abstract and intangible—that they are magnificent as pieces of rhetoric, but that they do not bear with sufficient directness on actual life. Even in his ideals Swinburne stands too much apart from the actual hopes and fears and sorrows of humanity. There is plenty of force and fire—indeed, the poet frequently lashes himself into a very frenzy of excitement—but his enthusiasm is sometimes overwrought and hyper-emotional. In the Prelude to the *Songs before Sunrise* Swinburne gives us his noblest statement of his ideal:

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime . . .
A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
As loose the bonds, or make them strong
Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.
By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
There are who rest not; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

His views about the great metaphysical, philosophical, and social problems which confront singers as well as thinkers in modern times, are easily to be discovered. His attitude is pessimistic in so far as he finds no satisfactory solution to the questions, "Whence? whither? why?" The riddle of the painful earth is, for him, eternally painful.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.—*Garden of Proserpine.*

And just because man has but one life in which to fulfil himself, just because there is no chance of moral evolution in the hereafter, it is incumbent upon him to reach the highest here and now. It is a misconception to suppose that Swinburne aims chiefly at the gratification of the senses, or, indeed, at any kind of enjoyment pure and simple. The human race shall ultimately become perfect: it shall become so by the conscious efforts of countless individuals, who shall themselves reap no benefit from their endeavours. This is no egoistic or materialistic doctrine: it is a creed of hope and faith. Swinburne is, however, in so far materialistic, that

he admits no spiritual interpretation of the universe. God, as we know Him, is the creation of the human mind: there is no God but the impersonal, common soul of man.

While the general trend of Swinburne's creed is hopeful, there are many passages in which he is much more conscious of man's nothingness than of his divinity. The attitude of indifference to life is that which seems to be natural to him, while the other attitude of strenuous striving and altruism is that which his reason approves and his will adopts. Consequently there are in his poetry frequent lapses into hopelessness and weariness, and almost equally frequent attempts to make momentary enjoyment take the place of the lasting satisfaction which is denied. This accounts for his notorious experiments in sensation and sensationalism, though even those poems which most justly repel us, show little of the genuinely sensuous or sensual enjoyment which may be found, for example, in some of the 17th century lyrists. His intellect and his imagination are far more potent influences than his senses.

It is precisely this lack of personal participation in any of the most intimate feelings of humanity that constitutes one of Swinburne's main defects, whether as lyric or dramatic poet. The human element, not descriptive but personal; social interest, not in movements but in living men and women—these are curiously wanting in his poetry. He is intellectually detached and apart.

> The joys, the loves, the labours, whence men reap
> Rathe fruit of hopes and fears,
> I have not made mine.—*Thalassius.*

The one exception to this statement is his attraction to childhood.

Dramas.—Swinburne began his mature poetic work with the publication of *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), which was followed by a second Greek tragedy, *Erechtheus* (1875). These two plays are classic in spirit as well as in form: he grasps the essential tragedy of the Greek stories; and it is not his fault that it is impossible to reawaken interest in legends so remote from modern interests and difficulties. Of the magnificence of the actual poetry, the splendour of the blank verse and of the choruses, there is no question. The most famous passage in *Atalanta* is the spring song, which is unsurpassed for pure beauty, melody, and joy in the loveliness of the awakening year. In *Erechtheus* the chorus is equally fine, notably in the passage beginning:

> Out of the north wind grief came forth,
> And the shining of a sword out of the sea.

It would take the pen of Swinburne the critic to exaggerate, in the case of such lyrics, the merits of Swinburne the poet. The Scottish trilogy, *Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874), and *Mary Stuart* (1881), is written after the Elizabethan model. But the interest is purely literary, and the plays suffer from the defects we should

expect—diffuseness, rhetoric where there should be action, character dissection where there should be characterization.

Lyric Poetry.—The genius of Swinburne is not primarily dramatic, and his best work, even in the plays, is all of it lyrical. There are few things which for sheer charm of sound can be set beside such poems as *The Garden of Proserpine, A Ballad of Burdens*, or *A Leave-taking*, in the first series of *Poems and Ballads*. That he never excelled these early poems points to one weakness. Though he adds bulk and soars at moments to greater heights, it is on the whole true, that there is practically no growth in Swinburne's work. Yet, when he is truly inspired, "his speech," like that of his own Thalassius, "is a burning fire," and we feel

> that whence comes light or quickening flame
> Thence only this thing came.

Style.—Sometimes, however, his love of experiment leads him into danger. His lines are often too long—containing even as many as twenty syllables:

> In the measureless music of things, in the fervour of forces that rest or that roam.

Or his double rhymes and use of alliteration degenerate into tricks which are merely exasperating (*cf.* his parody of himself in *Nephelidia*), particularly when he chooses to repeat sibilants:

> Now like one stricken, shrank and sank and sobbed.

Or he uses unusual or invented words and too many compounds—*e.g.* deciduous, perdurable, fluctuant, us-ward, me-ward, and the like.

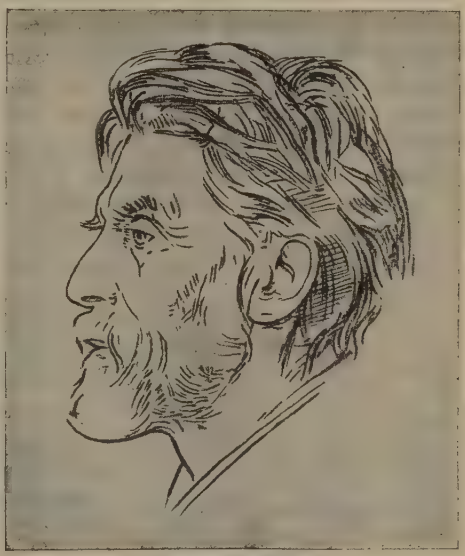
If we try to sum up the impression left upon us by Swinburne's verse, it is the memory of the actual sound, the metrical skill and variety, which remains most vivid. We may rebel against his exaggeration, lack of depth and insight, and shallowness of thought. But beauty of music, of rhythm, of sentiment—all these delight us in his poetry. Yet the pleasure they afford, intense as it is, is not the lasting satisfaction, the supreme joy given by the greatest creative poets and artists.

ROBERT BRIDGES (born 1844)

Life.—Robert Bridges was born in 1844 at Walmer, of a family long established in Kent. Ten years later he went to school at Eton, and there became one of a set of friends whom he has described in his Memoir of Digby Mackworth Dolben as ardent Puseyites and readers of the poets—especially Milton, Keats, Tennyson, and the Brownings. In 1863 he went to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he distinguished himself on the river; then, after taking his degree in 1867, travelled in Egypt, Syria, and Germany, and on his return entered at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he eventually became casualty physician. In

1882, after an illness, he retired to the manor-house of Yattendon in Berkshire; there married, and lived for twenty years. In 1906 he removed to Chilswell, near Oxford, where he had built himself a house. In the autumn of 1913 he was appointed poet laureate.

Poems.—The now famous *Shorter Poems* began to appear in 1873—the first three books separately, in 1873, 1879, and 1880. Books IV. and V. were added in 1890 and 1893. Meanwhile *The Growth of Love*, a poem in twenty-four sonnets, had been printed in 1876 and re-edited in 1890; and a series of seven blank-verse plays, *Nero* (Parts I. and II.), *Palicio*, *The Return of Ulysses*, *The Captives*, *Achilles in Scyros*, *The Humours of the Court*, *The Feast of Bacchus*, appeared between 1885 and 1894. In 1898 began the publication of a collected edition in six volumes, with many pieces added from the *Monthly Review* and other periodicals. Another edition, but without the plays, was issued in one volume in 1912. Thirty-six poems not yet included in this edition were published in 1920 under the title of *October, and other Poems*.



Robert Bridges.
(From a drawing by W. Rothenstein.

Prose Works.—(1) *John Keats: a Critical Essay* (1895; revised 1916), *The Necessity of Poetry* (1918); (2) Editions of the Poems of R. W. Dixon and D. M. Dolben, with *Memoirs* (1909 and 1911); (3) *On Milton's Blank Verse in "Paradise Lost"* (1887; revised 1893), *On the Prosody of "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes"* (1889), and *Milton's Prosody and Classical Metres in English Verse* (1901); (4) *On English Pronunciation* (1910), and *On English Homophones* (1919).

Characteristics.—Mr. Bridges is the most learned in his craft of English poets, not excepting Milton himself, who had a more limited field of knowledge and less time for experiment. Critics have at times shown a dread lest such skill should be too near akin to pedantry; but Mr. Bridges' experiments have all been in the direction of freedom and newness of expression, and the spontaneity of his lyrical impulse is proved by a remarkable number of his shorter poems. Such are those beginning, "Behold the radiant Spring," "O golden Sun, whose ray my path illumineth," "Awake to be loved, my heart, awake! awake!" and "Joy, sweetest life-born joy, where dost thou dwell?" with the memorable stanza:—

Then comes the happy moment: not a stir
In any tree, no portent in the sky;
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
The morrow hath no name to call it by,
But life and joy are one—we know not why—
As though our very blood long breathless lain
Had tasted of the breath of God again.

The same quickness of vision and expression is seen in the many poems of the English countryside: "O bold majestic downs, smooth, fair, and lonely," "Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding," "There is a hill beside the silver Thames," "We left the city when the summer day Had verg'd already on its hot decline," and the winter landscape of "November," matched by the wonderful winter town scene in "London Snow." Deeper and tenderer are the notes touched in the Elegies, from the boyish recollections of the "Summerhouse on the Mound" and the Etonian "Dear and gentle stream," to that "On a Dead Child," which belongs, it cannot be doubted, to the autobiography of the soul. This is one of the poems which for originality and subtlety, combined with directness and beauty of phrasing, are unique in English, marking both the consummation of the old methods of verse and the inauguration of a new standard. Others are, "Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come" (*The Nightingales*), and "Noel: Christmas Eve, 1913":—

A frosty Christmas Eve
when the stars were shining,
Fared I forth alone
where westward falls the hill;
And from many a village
in the water'd valley
Distant music reached me,
peals of bells a-ringing:
The constellated sounds
ran sprinkling on earth's floor,
As the dark vault above
with stars was spangled o'er.

Almost equally notable are the Eclogues—modern dialogues which unite modern phrasing with a classical form, and thus bring back the pastoral into the world of poetry, with a great future before it. A similar union of qualities was attempted in the poems—such as "Now in Wintry Delights," and "A Letter to a Socialist," and "*Ibant Obscuri*"—which are written in quantitative hexameters, according to the rules first suggested by William Stone. By this method rhythms both beautiful and new are obtained, some resembling and others differing from those found in the classical poetry; but the experiments have hitherto failed to gain popularity, partly because no one but Mr. Bridges has yet succeeded in writing in quantity with any ease, and still more because the current classical education has confused the ear of almost all readers who could be interested in such verse. On the other hand, the seven Plays, though written in excellent blank verse, and abounding in fine poetical

passages, are laid in scenes too remote, and filled with action hardly violent enough for a modern theatre.

Still more interesting than their form is the character which all these poems express: in one aspect typically English, aristocratic, stoical, and restrained almost to the point of commonplace; in another mood unconventional, scientific in inquiry, and fearless in realism. Decency is with this poet a natural law, but he can face with open eyes all sorrow and pain, the death of the young and beautiful, the unrelenting cruelty of old age; and he writes more freely still of love. The exaltation of certain sonnets in *The Growth of Love*, the spiritual intimacy of "My delight and thy delight," the dramatic intensity of "I will not let thee go"—these reveal in perfection not a lover's creed only, but a lover's heart. Of dogmatic religion no trace is to be found; but something may be inferred from the magnificent piece in scazon metre, "Since I believe in God, the Father Almighty," and from the last lines of "Noel":—

> But to me heard afar
> it was starry music,
> Angels' song, comforting
> as the comfort of Christ
> When he spake tenderly
> to his sorrowful flock:
> The old words came to me
> by the riches of time
> Mellow'd and transfigured,
> as I stood on the hill
> Heark'ning in the aspect
> Of th' eternal silence.

Philosophy of Poetry.—Few English poets have given any clear account of their views on the nature of poetry. Mr. Bridges stands here on a level with Wordsworth and Coleridge: he agrees substantially with both, and having had a scientific as well as a poetical training he is able to state his belief with precision as well as emotion. The last two paragraphs of the elegy called "Recollections of Solitude" are an impassioned address to the Muse, who

> with enamouring spell
> Feedest the stolen powers of godlike youth
> On dear imagination's only truth,
> Building with song a temple of desire . . .

For the creations of art are a new world, and a more divine and lasting one than the material universe, which by itself can give nothing but the inanimate or the transient.

> But happy he who, numbered of thy choice,
> Walketh aloof from nature's clouded plan:
> For all God's world is but the thought of man;
> Wherein hast thou re-formed a world apart,
> The mutual mirror of his better heart. . . .
> Nay, all that nature gave or fortune gives
> Joys that his spirit is most jealous of . . .

Wear thine eternity, and are loved best
By thee transfigured and in thee possest;
Who madest beauty, and from thy boundless store
Of beauty shalt create for evermore.

These profoundly significant lines anticipate Benedetto Croce in philosophy, and in lucidity and persuasive power excel him greatly.

Prose Style.—Mr. Bridges writes a prose that is, like his verse, a product of mingled science and art. Evidently the problem which he has set himself, and achieved, is how to pack into the tersest forms of sound English the greatest amount of relevant and interesting matter. In doing this he expresses, as surely as in his poetry, a character at once virile and sensitive, reticent and truthful, serious and playful, ardent and restrained. His studies in Miltonic and classical prosody are as fascinating as they are cogent; his Memoirs of his three friends and fellow-poets, Dixon, Dolben, and Mary Coleridge (*Cornhill*, October 1907) are not less remarkable for their justice than for their sympathetic insight; his essay on Keats is an indispensable key for the student, and as a brilliant and convincing interpretation of one poet by another probably without a parallel.

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Chapter 10. THE END OF THE CENTURY

The Novelists: George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, R. L. Stevenson, George Gissing, Rudyard Kipling, Sir James Barrie—Essayists and Critics: Walter Pater, R. L. Stevenson

THE NOVELISTS

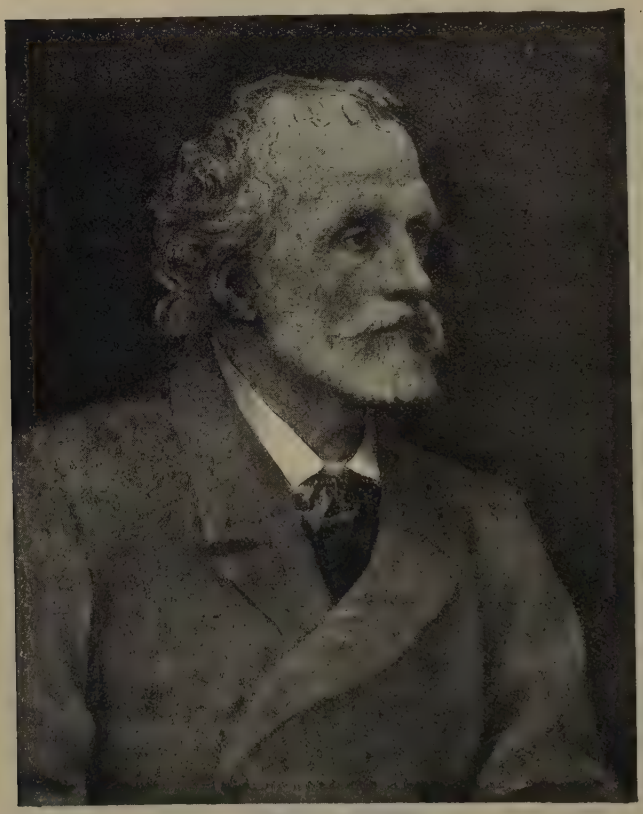
GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909).—In the *Letters of George Meredith*, edited and published by his son in 1912, may be found most of the important facts about his life. He was born in Portsmouth on February 12, 1828, the grandson of a naval outfitter, one Melchizedek Meredith, who bears a close resemblance to the great Mel in *Evan Harrington*. At the age of fourteen he was sent to school at Neuwied, where he was greatly influenced in religious matters by his teachers, the Moravians. In 1844 he was articled to a solicitor; but the law did not attract him, and every moment that could be snatched from business was devoted to literature. Among his literary friends was Mrs. Nicolls, the daughter of Thomas Love Peacock, a woman nine years older than himself, whom he married in 1849, when he was only twenty-one. The marriage was not a happy one, and they separated some years later. In 1861 Mrs. Meredith died, and three years afterwards Meredith married Miss Marie Vulliamy, with whom he lived happily for twenty years. *Faith on Trial* is the record of his anguish at her death in 1885.

Meredith was very slow in obtaining recognition from the public, though he was quickly acclaimed by those who were most competent to judge—George Eliot, Swinburne, and Kingsley, for example. Money was, however, hard to come by, and he was forced to take up journalism of different kinds—reviewing, acting as foreign correspondent to the *Morning Post*, as publisher's reader, and later on, at the invitation of John Morley, as temporary editor of the *Fortnightly*. Sometimes his duties took him to the Continent, but the greater part of his life was passed in Surrey—first at Esher, and later on at Flint Cottage, Box Hill. It was here, in 1909, in ripe old age, that Meredith passed away—as much in sympathy with youthful ideas and aspirations as when he published his first volume of poetry in 1851.

Works.—His earliest work of fiction was *The Shaving of Shagpat* (1856), a burlesque Oriental story. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) was the first of his great novels. It was followed by *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Sandra Belloni* (1864) and its sequel, *Vittoria* (1866), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* (1871), and *Beauchamp's Career* (1876). His greatest work, *The Egoist*, appeared in 1879. Then followed *The Tragic Comedians* (1880), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), *One of our Conquerors* (1891), *Lord Ormont and his Aminta* (1894), and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). In the last-named year he reprinted his short stories, in a volume

called *The Tale of Chloe.* His various volumes of poems, beginning with *Modern Love,* have now been collected in a single volume. *The Essay on Comedy* (1897) is his only contribution to the literature of criticism.

Characteristics.—It was as a poet that Meredith first appealed to the world, and his fiction as well as his poetry is the work of a poet. He himself could see no reason to separate his poetry from his prose for critical purposes; his thought, he said, expressed itself spontaneously in the one medium or the other, and could no more be divided from it than his body from his mind and soul. And it is true that in both prose and verse, the attitude towards life is the same.



George Meredith.

Meredith conceives life as a tragi-comedy, and his humour is thoughtful, even mournful in character. There is plenty of irony in his writing; he is too profound a humorist to show a trace of cynicism. His own Diana gives what is perhaps the best summary of his point of view: "Who can really *think* and not think hopefully? . . . When we despair or discolour things it is our senses in revolt, and they have made the sovereign brain their drudge." Meredith dislikes both the "rose-pink" and "dirty drab" view of life; he holds that "the sight of ourselves is wholesome, bearable, fructifying, finally a delight."

His humour is bound up with his broad, sympathetic knowledge of life. It is a part of that largeness of view which is necessary to his conception of the comic writer, who "must be able to penetrate." He has wit, brilliant and illumining; it is his distinguishing, his unique possession; no other English writer possesses in equal degree dexterity in the manipulation of language and the power to impart

to the reader enjoyment of such subtlety. But, in addition, Meredith's humour is a thing apart and equally alluring. In one of his letters R. L. Stevenson describes this power in illustrating his own.

> My view of life [he writes] is essentially the comic and the romantically comic . . . the notes that Meredith has found, Evan and the postillion, Evan and Rose, Harry in Germany. And to me these things are the good; beauty touched with sex and laughter, beauty with God's earth for the background, . . . comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life (laughter and tragedy-in-a-good-humour having kissed), that is the last word of moved representation, embracing the greatest number of elements of fate and character, and telling its story, not with the one eye of pity, but with the two of pity and mirth.

The passions which Meredith depicts show the widest possible range of variation. He hates sentimentalism, but he gives us, in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, the purest and most delicate romance. He cannot bear to play with the reader's feelings, and though he is moved, it is never to tears; yet his pathos is as genuine as his humour, and his novels and his poetry are full of both. *Modern Love* is proof that he can command the tragic muse with as much success as his better-loved mistress, comedy, and the reader feels constantly in his work how true it is that tragedy and comedy are composed of the same elements, though differently mixed. In sheer exuberant fun, also, he need fear no rival. One of many examples occurs near the beginning of *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* — the story of Great Will, in the scene "where [he] killed the deer, dragging Falstaff all over the park after it by the light of Bardolph's nose, upon which they put an extinguisher if they heard any of the keepers." The same delightful vein is well seen in that fantastic tale, *The Shaving of Shagpat*. Humour of a different order may be found in the public-house scenes in *Evan Harrington*, or, again different, in the whole conception of *The Egoist*. Meredith deals with the big problems of life and death, love and hate, but he is no more afraid of honest laughter than of the sorrow that purifies and the passion that unmans.

> Laughter! O thou reviver of sick Earth, good for the spirit, good
> For body thou! to both art wine and bread.

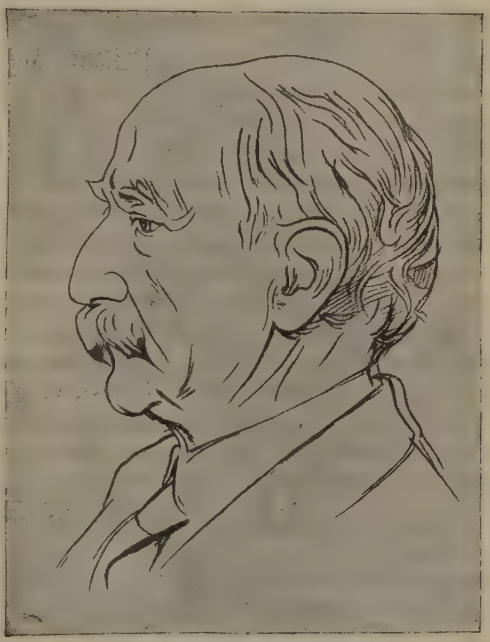
Creed.—Meredith's theory of life is eminently sane and practical, and all the more so because he recognizes the sanity of idealism as well as the virtue of realism. He differs from the other poet-optimists of the 19th century in that he is convinced neither of the soul's immortality nor of its pre-natal existence. He conceives that it is at least possible that Nature, red in tooth and claw, is merciless and pitiless to the individual. But in spite of this agnosticism and the refusal to accept any anodyne which deadens, instead of satisfying, reason, he maintains a consistently optimistic attitude. Without what he thought might prove to be delusive hopes for the future of the individual ego, he rejoices in the larger hope, which is practical certainty, of the future of the race. The individual life does not die; it lives on in the larger, richer life of the future which it helps to build up.

Just as he sees hope for the individual and for the race in the process of evolution, so, too, Meredith trusts in growth and change to bring about social and political advance. More brain power, the cultivation of reason and of intellect, the help of the Comic Spirit alone can bring the strength to get rid of undesirable conditions. He hates the materialism and meanness and faithlessness of modern life; above all, he hates the undue preponderance given to wealth, and the enervation and weakness to which it leads. Yet everywhere, amid prevalent evil, he recognizes signs of progress and ultimate good; he believes in the worth of human fellowship and the duty of service. Such service can be rendered only as a result of the knowledge that comes from a resolute facing of facts in nature and in human life.

Style.—Both in prose and in poetry Meredith is a difficult writer, and this is due only in part to the profundity of his thought. His wit and his consequent delight in the skilful play of language sometimes lead him astray; he is so anxious to avoid the commonplace that at times he falls into obscurity by what seems sheer wilfulness. Sometimes, again, he credits the reader with his own velocity of thought and power to spring from one craggy metaphor to another. He refuses to explain or interpret, and states the conclusions at which he has arrived, or the points of view he wishes us to adopt, without making it at all clear why we should do so. Another reason for his occasional obscurity is his wilful and deliberate use of elliptical sentences. No writer is more allusive in style than Meredith. His language is naturally metaphorical and symbolical: he does not seek comparisons; they spring to his lips unsought. As a result he is seldom direct and simple in his appeal. He invites intellectual appreciation as well as æsthetic enjoyment. Again, he has a great deal to say, and is able to express himself by many different methods which jostle each other for precedence, so that his language is apt to become burdened with the richness of an overflowing imagination. His aim is to compress into a few words profound thought and memorable images: success, when it is achieved, is absolute, but failure is common, and then the knottiness of the thought and expression requires careful unravelling. But in the frequent pages where there is neither straining nor struggling, he achieves the beauty of the inevitable in word and in phrase.

THOMAS HARDY (born 1840).—Thomas Hardy is the greatest living English novelist, and the tale of his writings, which began as long ago as 1871 with *Desperate Remedies*, has seen several volumes added to it within the present century. Mr. Hardy is most popular as the Wessex novelist, and he excels as the interpreter of village life and peasant folk in his own Dorsetshire home. His most remarkable achievement is, however, *The Dynasts*, a new form of epic-drama which is, in a sense, complementary to the novels. In recent years he has published only verse, and his poetry, though it is occasionally deficient in beauty of sound, has secured his position as a poet. It is hard to determine whether he be a greater master of verse or of prose.

Works.—The history of his life is mainly a record of the publication of his books. The following are his chief novels: *Desperate Remedies* (1871); *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872); *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873); *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874); *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876); *The Return of the Native* (1878); *The Trumpet-Major* (1880); *A Laodicean* (1881); *Two on a Tower* (1882); *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886); *The Woodlanders* (1887); *Wessex Tales* (1888); *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891); *Jude the Obscure* (1895); *The Well-Beloved* (1897); *A Changed Man, and Other Tales* (1913). His chief volumes of poetry are: *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* (1898); *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1902); *The Dynasts* (1904–8); *Time's Laughing-stocks and Other Verses* (1909); *Satires of Circumstance: Lyrics and Reveries* (1914); *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* (1917); *Collected Poems* (1919). See, too, his papers on "Candour in Fiction" and "The Science of Fiction" which appeared in the *New Review*, January 1890 and April 1891.



Thomas Hardy.
(From a drawing by W. Rothenstein.)

Character of Novels.—He is most successful and obviously writes with most enjoyment when he deals with the characters and the places with which he is most familiar and which he has studied most accurately. He is not much interested in middle-class respectability, and not at ease with the aristocracy. But his peasants are integral parts of the landscape in which they live and move: the characters and the scenery form one organic whole, and they are inseparable without infinite damage to both. Thus the Reddleman, Diggory Venn, literally belongs to Egdon Heath; his first cousin—in steadfastness of purpose and loyal love—Gabriel Oak, does not live far away. And so it is with all the more impressive characters. They and their surroundings are observed and described in the greatest possible detail, and we are made to feel the interrelation of man and nature. Mr. Hardy can "describe a scene and colour it with a mood"—that is, he can grasp the essential in external nature, and fit into the background thus conjured up, just those people who are in harmony with it. Thus his novels have an "atmosphere" of their own, indescribable but unmistakable. The

actual nature-description is not obtrusive, far-fetched, or disproportionately exalted. The background of the morning walk with Angel in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for example, is a necessary *mise en scène;* the resulting idyll is perfect in its beauty and harmony. The same thing is true of all Mr. Hardy's descriptions, and, much as he delights in them, it is not merely as a painter of nature that he justifies his claim to the rank of a great writer. A novel must show constructive skill, proportion, a well-balanced plot, if it is to succeed as a story; it must prove the author's insight into character and his knowledge of life; and it must be able to retain the reader's interest by the manner in which it deals with the events which befall the *dramatis personæ*. There are novels of adventure, of character, and of manners, according to the space relatively occupied by these in the working out. Mr. Hardy writes novels of character and secondarily of manners. The adventurous element is very small, and the action seldom unexpected. The end of the story may often be guessed long before it is reached: the novels, with the exception of *Desperate Remedies*, the earliest, are never sensational, and when, as in *Tess* or *Jude the Obscure*, there is a climax of tragedy, this is reached so gradually that the reader is fully prepared for what is coming, and though he may grieve, there can be no violent excitement. The profound effect is due to psychological insight and revelation of character. Complex passions and difficult situations are treated; the problems considered are intricate, and their solution depends on modern social conditions as well as on the fate which rules the lives of individuals. Even the stories which are almost purely idyllic show complications unknown to earlier and simpler ages. Mr. Hardy's point of view is sombre: his conception of life borders always on the tragic, and though he strives to be impartial, his subtle characterization,[1] his austerity and sense of the mystery of existence, lead him naturally to grave conclusions.

Treatment.—Mr. Hardy is not satisfied to deal with commonplace people or ordinary situations: it is not often, as in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, that his simple villagers remain the sole occupants of the stage. His chief characters are men and women with mighty emotions and passions; their lives offer boundless possibilities for development—nor are they left as they begin. Driven by impulse and caprice—especially the women—they find themselves in strange predicaments whence escape is impossible. The resulting situations, in spite of Mr. Hardy's very real sense of humour, are sometimes ridiculous or bizarre—the slaughter of the pig in *Jude the Obscure*, for instance. It is Mr. Hardy's curious delight in the actual and his hatred of convention which lead him into these oddities. Generally he is justified; his strength lies in the interest he extracts from ordinary events, circumstances, and people. No one who has read *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, for example, is likely to dwell on the actuality of the abnormal wife-selling scene as the real centre of interest. Henchard's later actions, his development, and the workings of Nemesis

[1] See, *e.g.*, the wonderful description of Clym in *The Return of the Native*, Book III., chap. i.

in surroundings apparently normal—these are the things which show the writer's greatness and self-restraint.

The structure of Mr. Hardy's plots is almost always admirable: there is no mistaking the singleness of artistic conception, the imaginative unity which makes the tale one, whole, and indivisible. Similarly with the characters themselves. It is impossible to forget the delightful country scenes at the tranter's or the maltster's, or with the mummers or the Sunday barber: the various villagers, the master mason, poor "wambling" William Worm and the rest, are acquaintances for life. But towering above them are the commanding figures of the chief characters—Tess, Bathsheba, Elfride, Jude, Eustacia Vye, Clym, Gabriel Oak, Diggory Venn—with their tragic histories and struggles against an overmastering fate. And there are such people as Sergeant Troy, Festus, Bob Loveday—weak, and often wicked, but memorable and impressive. Their creator understands to the full men and women—the men and women of his own country. His work, like Shakespeare's, is a permanent contribution to the history of the English people.

Style.—Mr. Hardy's prose style can scarcely be considered apart, for it exists as a means to an end. "To a masterpiece in story," he writes, "there appertains a beauty of shape, no less than to a masterpiece in pictorial or plastic art, capable of giving to the trained mind an equal pleasure." The actual expression in his stories is bound up with this beauty of shape. It is part of the story as an "organism." Consequently the style rises to its height when the climax of the story is reached—for example, in certain tragic passages, or in those descriptions of natural surroundings which succeed in interpreting the inner meaning of the tragedy of life. It is as a rule clear, terse, and austere, but now and then—though never when the passage is important—the similes are far-fetched or inappropriate, and the mode of expression stiff. It is his supreme merit as a master of style to avoid rant, "fine writing," and excess of all kinds, while he succeeds in expressing deep emotion and passion. Though it is not as a stylist that he chiefly claims attention, yet he has in perfection the style which expresses his own mood and fits his subject.

It is possible to differ from Mr. Hardy's fatalistic views, and to refuse to accept his conclusions on the subject of practical ethics. But his sanity, self-restraint, and constructive power, his sincerity and subtle characterization, more than atone for any defects of theory. He is one of the greatest modern writers of fiction, for from his writing may be gained that "mental enlargement," as he himself calls it, which comes from a true portrayal of life by one who sees it steadily, and, if not whole, at least with profound humanity.

R. L. STEVENSON (1850–94).—Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in November 1850, the son of Thomas Stevenson, Secretary to the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses. The Bell Rock Lighthouse had been built by his grandfather. He was educated at schools in Edinburgh, and at the University

there, and soon found that his true bent lay in the direction of letters. The strong vein of practical talent in his ancestry urged him to an active life, and it was only his ill-health which satisfied his conscience in turning to literature. He was called to the Scottish Bar, but never practised. Thereafter he led a wandering life on the continent of Europe and in America, seeking partly health and partly new experiences. Meantime he was sedulously perfecting himself in the art of writing. Scotland remained, however, his chief love, and some of his most vivid and idiomatic Scottish chapters were written abroad. In the last years of his life he settled on an estate in Samoa, where he died at the age of forty-four.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Works.—His earliest serious writings were essays contributed to various magazines and afterwards collected. Two little books of travel followed, *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879). He was a born story-teller, and after various experiments with the short story — *The New Arabian Nights* (1882)—in 1883 he appeared as a regular novelist with the immortal *Treasure Island*. Two years later he mingled adventure with psychology in *Prince Otto*, and the year 1886 saw the publication of *Kidnapped* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Then came "that lurid embodiment of fascinating evil," *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), *Catriona*, a sequel to *Kidnapped* (1892), and the *Island Nights Entertainments* (1893); and after his death *St. Ives*—completed by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch (1897), and the fragmentary *Weir of Hermiston* (1896).

Characteristics.—Stevenson is one of the purest types in literature of the romantic adventurer. Romance to him was whatever was happening round the next turn of the road and beyond the next bend of the river. Into every phase of life he carried the eager interest of a boy, and exulted in bizarre contrasts and the discovery of beauty in strange environments. Joined with this fresh inquisitiveness was a robust optimism—the belief that to the seeing eye there is an infinity of good and beauty in all things. Although belonging by date to the end of the 19th century, he was spiritually more akin to the romantic outburst which heralded its dawn. His optimism had little in common with that of the typical Victorian, for there was no smugness in it ; but, on the other hand, it was irrevocably opposed to a drab literal realism. His confession of faith, moral and artistic, may be found in a sentence in his *Lantern Bearers :*

> The observer, poor soul, with his documents, is all abroad. For to look at a man is but to court deception. We shall see the trunk from which he draws his nourishment ; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by wind and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism is that of the poets, to climb up after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven for which he lives. And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets : to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.

A persistent purpose of joy and charity towards all things, and a stern courage with oneself—such was the gospel which he preached. Like all true Scots he was a moralist, and there was a spice of Calvinism in his blood. For arrogance and the cowardice which is not ashamed he had no tolerance ; and though he was charitable towards others, he was always stern with himself. Few preachers have so honestly practised their precepts.

Style.—Coming amid the lack-lustre and jointless prose which was the fashion of the seventies, Stevenson's style was in the nature of a revelation. At the start it was derivative : as he has told us, he played the "sedulous ape" to many writers, notably Sir Thomas Browne, Lamb, John Bunyan, and the translators of the English Bible ; and his readings in old memoirs and Scottish law also influenced him. But if the influences are patent, he gave a true individuality to the result. He is a master of delicate rhythms and graphic phrases, and many passages in his early writings are hard to equal as models of highly polished and deeply considered prose. Such a style was, however, too mannered and elaborate for the ordinary needs of a writer, and as he advanced as a novelist its character became simpler and freer, while still maintaining its delicacy and urbanity. Romances such as *Kidnapped, Catriona, The Master of Ballantrae,* and *The Black Arrow* are, of course, deliberately written with a spice of archaism. But towards the end of his life he was very near attaining, as in the fragment of *Weir of Hermiston,* a style which is characterized by no special mannerisms and which has rarely been equalled in beauty, vigour, and the strange, haunting quality of its rhythms.

The Novels.—As a writer of the straightforward romance of incident, for that class which Sir Walter Scott desired as his public—"soldiers and sailors and young people of bold and active disposition"—Stevenson has never been excelled. *Treasure Island* has not been surpassed in any language. Naturally his disposition led him first to historical romances, where the haze which screens the past heightens the picturesqueness of the background. He had an extraordinary power of sound historical reconstruction, which is to be seen in *The Black Arrow* and the three Jacobite tales —*Kidnapped*, *Catriona*, and *The Master of Ballantrae*. But he was more than a mere master of narrative. Alan Breck is a full and satisfying study of one type of Highland gentleman, and David Balfour of its Lowland opposite. *The Master of Ballantrae*—that "conflict of a scoundrel and a maniac narrated by a coward"—is full of psychological subtlety. He was a master of many genres: burlesque middle-class life in *The Wrong Box*; *diablerie* in *Dr. Jekyll* and in many of the short stories; strange doings in outland places, as in *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb Tide*. His weakness as a novelist lay in a certain artificiality of construction and thinness of treatment, so that the characters, while very vivid to the eye, are less concretely presented to the intellect. That is the inevitable defect of the romancer, who is apt to secure drama by means of puppets. But towards the close of his life Stevenson had gone beyond objective romance, and in *Weir of Hermiston* gave the world what promised to be a novel worthy to rank with the greatest of the century. In his earlier books his women had been more or less lay figures, for, like Sir Walter Scott, he was inclined to regard the sex as a toast to be drunk after King and Country. But in *Weir of Hermiston* the portraits of Mrs. Weir and the elder and the younger Kirsty are drawn with profound insight and strength.

Short Stories.—Stevenson was also a master of the short story, both of the extravaganza, as in *The New Arabian Nights*; the moral epilogue, as in "Markheim"; and the more orthodox type. His short stories are never condensed novels; in each a single episode or character is made the centre of interest, and his unique visualizing power and his command of atmosphere enabled him to create an adequate environment in a few sentences. He is best, perhaps, in those stories which introduce the supernatural, as in "Thrawn Janet" and "The Tale of Tod Lapraik" interpolated in *Catriona*.

As a figure in literary history Stevenson has that sharp detachment from the atmosphere which we call distinction. Both as a preacher of a sane and manly gospel of life and as a laborious artist in words he had a profound effect upon his generation. If he falls just short of the first rank, he is destined in all probability to exercise an influence greater than many more exalted classics, for his appeal is at once wide and intimate. No obscurity or harshness stands in the way of his appreciation, and his eternal youthfulness will never lose its charm for youth.

GEORGE GISSING (1857–1903).—George Robert Gissing was born at Wakefield,

November 22, 1857, being the eldest son of a pharmaceutical chemist from Suffolk, who corresponded with Hooker, Bentham, and other botanists. He gained an exhibition to Owens College, Manchester, where he overworked "insanely," and at the same time involved himself in certain indiscretions that entailed dismissal. As a clerk in Liverpool, crossing steerage to America, as classical tutor, and then as gasfitter in Boston, Gissing tasted the bitterness of poverty and starvation among strangers. Returning to Europe in 1877, he managed to secure a period of quiet study among philosophers at Jena. Much of his early life may be traced from *Born in Exile*, which, though generally ignored, secured for him the friendship and admiration of John Morley and Frederic Harrison. Having reached England in 1878, he devoted much time to study in the British Museum, and contributed to the more serious reviews. Meantime the early novels, showing the effect of poverty upon character, appeared without attracting much notice, until the comparative success of *Demos* provided the means for visits to Rome, Naples, and Athens, of which the keen enjoyment lights up *A Life's Morning*—though gloom again overshadows *The Nether World*. Although the subsequent and more solid success of *New Grub Street* was followed by a second disastrous marriage, Gissing was now able to depend upon something like an adequate return for his work, and to spend most of his remaining years in the country, for which he had always yearned. It was a short life, full of suffering—largely, indeed, self-inflicted as the result of an "uncomfortable" temperament. But his nature was, in essence, both friendly and affectionate. He had at bottom the suave, beauty-loving intellect of a genuine scholar.

For all his sympathy with Dickens, Gissing stands out in English fiction as a leader in a very different school. He was not a great novelist, but he was a pioneer of a movement which greatly influenced his generation. In his work the impulse towards realism was serious, considered, and, moreover, instinctive. It had not become either a pose or an obsession. It was not narrowed to unsavoury discussion of the uglier social problems. His style remained scholarly, plastic, and dignified. On the other hand, he had the current weaknesses of his school. His conception of real men and women, and of the realities of life, will admit no place for faith or idealism—the fancies that warm the heart and stir the pulse, the romance pictures that stimulate the imagination, the quixotisms that arm the will. He must shut out all the mysteries in a man's soul whereby he lives beyond and above himself and conquers the world's cruelty.

But as in Dickens—and unlike many who followed him—there was a fiery passion behind his sombre pictures. Gissing painted the ugliness of life because he found it ugly and hated its foul image. Partly his own bitter experience of the hard struggle of pariahdom, partly his natural sympathy with the under-dog, forced his utterance, while distorting his view. There were truths, cruel truths, which comfortable prosperity chose to ignore; there were stunted, warped specimens of humanity whom society passed by on the other side. He did not, like the

decadent realist, select the sordid either from personal taste or to prove a theory in art. He did not pry into the poor for copy. His atmosphere was not a pose; his aim was not merely to investigate and to explore. He, indeed, at his best is largely autobiographical.

Works.—His novels were little read until the appearance of *New Grub Street*, in 1891, revealed a power to be reckoned with. This is probably the finest example of his work, although the earlier *Demos* (1886), *The Unclassed* (1884), *Thyrza* (1887), and *The Nether World* (1889) had reached almost as high a level; nor is deterioration to be detected in any that followed—such as *The Odd Women* (1893), *The Whirlpool* (1897), or *Our Friend the Charlatan* (1901).

His fine critical study of *Charles Dickens* (1898) is evidence of a maturity illumined by sympathy for brighter things, and a similar hope, with even touches of the romantic, may be found in his own last novels, notably in *The Crown of Life*, and in the charming sketches *By the Ionian Sea* (1901). The semi-autobiographical *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903) is, perhaps, the greatest of his works, certainly the most lovable and human. In it we find him at last a conqueror, knowing the promise of life. Seeing what had been always within the man, we can understand more clearly the bitterness of his painting—before the vision.

RUDYARD KIPLING (born 1865).—Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay on December 30, 1865, the son of Mr. J. Lockwood Kipling, who was a distinguished Indian official, and himself a writer and artist. Mr. Kipling belongs at least as much to the 20th as to the 19th century; but as his most characteristic work was produced before 1900, and as he himself typified most of the influences of the end of the century, it seems fitting to include him here. He was educated in India and began journalism at an early age, his first volume of verse, *Departmental Ditties*, appearing at the age of twenty-three, and his first volume of stories, *Plain Tales from the Hills*, a year later. By the early twenties he was already famous. He represents a rare example of a remarkable precocity followed by a steady growth of powers. He came to England in his twenty-fifth year, and has since lived for the most part in a Sussex manor-house, though his friendship with Cecil Rhodes led him to spend a considerable time in South Africa.

Works.—FICTION.—In fiction his chief work has been in the domain of short stories. He has written two novels, *The Naulahka* (1892), with Wolcott Balestier, and *The Light that Failed* (1891); but neither represents him at his best. *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887) are pictures of Anglo-Indian life and manners, with a few sketches of native life, done with a peculiar realism which reveals a scene like a searchlight. *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys*, *In Black and White*, *Under the Deodars*, *Wee Willie Winkie*, and *The Phantom 'Rickshaw* (1888–9) first proved to the world his talent and his astonishing variety of subjects. The native sketches are remarkable for their atmosphere and for their power of realizing the

Oriental point of view. Some of the stories are admirable excursions in pure farce, and one or two show a grim talent for the supernatural. *Wee Willie Winkie* foreshadowed Mr. Kipling's sympathy with child life. *Life's Handicap* (1891) was a similar collection containing "The Incarnation of Khrishna Mulvaney," an inimitable piece of boisterous comedy. In *Many Inventions* (1893) Mr. Kipling extended his range. "My Lord the Elephant" and "In the Rukh" were the forerunners of the later *Jungle Books*. "His Private Honour," "Love o' Women," and "Badalia Herodsfoot" deal subtly and dramatically with questions of remorse, conscience, and retribution. "The Finest Story in the World" is a tale of metempsychosis. *The Day's Work* (1898) is still more cosmopolitan in subject and varied in style. "The Brushwood Boy" is of the same imaginative quality as "The Finest Story in the World." "The Maltese Cat" belongs to the *Jungle Book* genre. *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904) was written largely under the inspiration of the South African War. "Bonds of Discipline" and "Their Lawful Occasions" are brilliant and semi-farcical studies of the British Navy. "They," in its imagination and tenderness, ranks with "The Brushwood Boy." *Actions and Re-actions* (1909) shows in one of the stories—"A Habitation Enforced"—a gift of subtle psychology worthy of Henry James.

Rudyard Kipling.

CHILDREN'S STORIES.—Of Mr. Kipling's children's stories, first come *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). They are fables of men and beasts in India, poetical rather than allegorical in motive, and they aim at interpreting the

actual character and mode of reasoning of the animals, with a side glance upon a human moral. *Captains Courageous* (1897) is the story of a pampered American boy who falls among the New England fishermen, and is made a man of by drastic treatment. *Stalky and Co.* (1899) is an audacious study of school life. *Kim* (1901) is probably Mr. Kipling's finest work. Kim is a street arab from Lahore, the derelict child of an Irish soldier, who is apprenticed to the secret service of the Indian Government. His journeys through India as the disciple of an old lama bring before the reader the panorama of the varied life of the country. No other of Mr. Kipling's books gives the reader so uncanny a sense of strange knowledge. *The Just So Stories* (1902), illustrated by the author, are playful and fantastic beast fables, written in a delightful burlesque style, with many charming verses. *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906) and *Rewards and Fairies* (1910) originated a new literary form. In both books two children encounter Puck, the " Old English " fairy, somewhere on the South Downs, and hear from him wonderful episodes in English history.

POETRY.—In poetry Mr. Kipling has published *Departmental Ditties, and Other Verses* (1886); *Barrack-Room Ballads, and Other Verses* (1892); *The Seven Seas* (1896); *The Five Nations* (1903); and *The Years Between* (1918). The poems are of much the same quality as the novels, containing vivid portraits of a large variety of people, and revealing a robust imperial sentiment, a brilliant talent for narrative and drama, and now and then giving us a beautiful lyric or a piece of dramatic philosophy, such as " M'Andrew's Hymn."

Characteristics.—The merits of Mr. Kipling's work are patent to almost every reader, the demerits to a much smaller number. In it each quality is apt to be balanced by a corresponding defect. His amazing visualizing power makes him sometimes harsh and garish; his lyric facility leads him occasionally to vulgar jingles. His virility sinks now and then into sheer ugliness, stridency, and noise. For a man of such subtle perceptions his work can be curiously shallow. But it is unwise to emphasize the defects too much, for he can generally provide instances of their stark opposite. He can beat the big drum with effect, but he is no less skilled in flute notes; and if his verse sometimes is not far remote from a music-hall catch, it can also attain a finished Horatian perfection and some of the delicate cadences of the best of the 17th-century lyrics. His tenderness is at least as remarkable as his virility. He represents the assurance and optimism of Britain at the end of the century, not always in its finest mood; but no man has more nobly expressed the moral side of the imperial ideal. He is at his best, perhaps, when he is dealing with subjects on the borderland of mysticism; and his sense of the subtle continuity of history is invaluable in an age which is apt to forget its ancestry.

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE (born 1860).—Sir James Barrie was born at Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire, and after some years of journalism in London, published his first notable book, *Auld Licht Idylls*, in 1888. This was followed by *A Window in Thrums*

(1889), and *My Lady Nicotine* in 1890. *The Little Minister* (1891) was his first attempt at a long novel. *Margaret Ogilvy* (a biography of his mother) and *Sentimental Tommy* appeared in 1896, the latter being followed by a sequel—*Tommy and Grizel*, in 1900. He was created a baronet in 1913, and awarded the Order of Merit in 1922.

Sir James Barrie's literary career may be said to have closed with the 19th century, and his later work has been done almost entirely for the stage, to which he has contributed in *The Admirable Crichton* perhaps the best modern comedy. His reputation as a writer rests principally upon the sketches of Scottish village life, for in the longer novels it is only when he is concerned with that subject that he walks with a sure step. He continued the work begun by Sir Walter Scott and John Galt in revealing the humour and pathos of the Scottish peasantry, but with a subtlety of art and economy of words unknown to the earlier masters. Certain sketches in *Auld Licht Idylls* and *A Window in Thrums*, and certain chapters in *The Little Minister* and *Sentimental Tommy* have not been excelled in their grave beauty and fidelity. In that domain he is an austere artist; when he treats of other spheres his work is apt to be marred by theatricality and faults of taste. What is known as the "Kailyard School" in Scottish fiction followed in his steps till the over-cultivation of a small province ended in something not unlike burlesque.

ESSAYISTS AND CRITICS

The latter half of the 19th century was not rich, as the first half had been, in essayists who dealt with the minor moralities and the comedy of life, or in critics whose purpose was purely æsthetic. Men like Ruskin and Arnold had always a didactic aim, and are more properly ranked with the school of reflection, great as was their critical influence. The names in what is commonly called "belles-lettres" are few in number, and the tradition of Lamb and Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt was obscured by a thousand new impulses. There are only two acknowledged masters of the leisured essay, Walter Pater and R. L. Stevenson.

Walter Pater.—Walter Pater (1839–94) was born in London and educated at King's School, Canterbury, and at Queen's College, Oxford. Elected to a fellowship at Brasenose in 1862, he spent the rest of his life in Oxford and in London, and, more than most scholars, avoided successfully and deliberately any personal contact with what is called ordinary life. The dates of his published volumes are almost the only landmarks in his career. If he lived somewhat aloof from humanity, his books stand also apart from the publications of his day. He belonged to "the æsthetes"—a cult which began with Ruskin and was represented in painting by the Pre-Raphaelites, and in poetry by Swinburne and Rossetti. Pater is its only notable prose representative. It was an attempt to express romance in a classical form, to impose "comely order" upon "curiosity and the love of beauty." Its philosophy expounded, in the language of Christianity, a form of Paganism which

had none of the pagan joyousness. Its votaries sought to "maximize" life and extract the utmost intellectual and emotional satisfaction from the fleeting moment. The cultivated mind became the test both in art and ethics, and the critic was apt to be drawn into strange side alleys and esoteric faiths.

Pater was probably, after Matthew Arnold, the greatest purely critical influence in later Victorian literature. But besides his critical work, he has left us a series of imaginary portraits and studies in spiritual development, embodying his creed of art and life. He possessed in a high degree the historical sense, and had a singular power of recreating the atmosphere and the modes of thought of a past age. His style has been highly praised and much imitated, though it is a difficult model to follow. Its faults are its occasional monotony and superfineness, the sentences being built up cell by cell, like a honeycomb, with the result that at times the rhythm is lost. But at its best its cadences are as exquisite and intangible as an air of music, and no man has a greater gift for haunting and unforgettable phrases. His first notable work was *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), containing chapters on "Pico della Mirandola," "Botticelli," "Luca della Robbia," "Michelangelo's Poetry," "Leonardo da Vinci," "The School of Giorgione," "Du Bellay," "Winckelmann," and a famous postscript, in which Pater sets forth his philosophy of life. In 1885 appeared his chief work, *Marius the Epicurean*, the spiritual history of the life of a young Roman in the age of the Antonines, who dies on the eve of finding salvation in the Christian Church. *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) continued this work of spiritual biography. The volume includes "A Prince of Court Painters" (Watteau), "Sebastian van Storck," "Denys l'Auxerrois," and "Duke Carl of Rosenmold." *Appreciations* (1889) is a volume of literary criticism, and includes, besides the famous essay on "Style," papers on "Wordsworth," "Coleridge," "Lamb," "Sir Thomas Browne," "Shakespeare," "Rossetti," and "O. Feuillet's *La Morte*." *Greek Studies* (1895) contained "A Study of Dionysus," "The Bacchanals of Euripides," "Hippolytus Veiled: a Study from Euripides," "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture," "The Marbles of Ægina," and "The Age of Athletic Prizemen: a Chapter in Greek Art." *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895) contained chapters on "Merimée," "Raphael," "Pascal," "Vezelay," "Apollo in Picardy," "Emerald Uthwart," and "Diaphaneite," in which last Pater reveals something of his boyhood. *Gaston de Latour* (1896) is an unfinished "imaginary portrait," a philosophical romance of France during the religious wars. Ronsard and Montaigne are among the characters, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew is an incident. *Essays from "The Guardian"* (1901) is a collection of short studies and reviews.

Pater worked in a narrow field, but his success within its limits was absolute, both in the substance and the manner of his writing. He began by yielding to what he calls the "chaotic variety and perplexity of interests" which characterized his own age. But as he grew older his selection grew more fastidious, and he returned to the central classical tradition. His genius was contemplative rather than creative. He had, however, one supreme constructive power—that of realizing

the mental processes of his characters, and if his people are apt to be otherwise pale, diaphanous shades, we know intimately the movements of their minds. He was a great portrayer of souls, and his famous style, with its needle-point fineness, was a perfect weapon for his rare and curious talent. His will never be a wide influence in literature, but it must be an abiding one.

Robert Louis Stevenson.—Stevenson was at his greatest as a novelist, though he is most perfect in his essays. Indeed, there can be no question that as an essayist in the vein of Lamb and Hazlitt he is the greatest which the later 19th century produced. To this type of writing he brought the main essential, charm of personality, and his style is as full of light, shadow, and music as a brook.

Stevenson's first literary efforts were notes on travel, and some of his most attractive work is to be found in this genre. *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1878–9) revealed his style in its most daring and capricious form. *The Silverado Squatters* (1893) is a series of studies of the author's life among the Californian mountains. *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes* (1889) is a brilliant impressionist picture of life in the Scottish capital. *In the South Seas* (1900) is a story of the author's cruise in a yacht during 1888–9 among the Marquesas, the Paumotus, and the Gilberts. *Essays of Travel* (1905) is a collection of scattered *carnets de voyage*. Stevenson looked upon life as an adventure, and, seeking romance, he found it, so that the episodes of his autobiography read like pages from his novels. In this group may be classed *A Footnote to History* (1892), dealing with German maladministration in Samoa—almost his only attempt at handling a political episode.

Of the essays proper, the first volume, *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), is written in the manner of *Travels with a Donkey*, and, in spite of the often self-conscious and modish style, its most notable feature is its wise and acute reflections on conduct. *Memories and Portraits* (1887) contains some of the most famous essays, such as "Old Mortality," "The Foreigner at Home," and "A Gossip on Romance." *Across the Plains* (1892) contains "The Lantern Bearers," the chapter on "Fontainebleau," "A Christmas Sermon," and "Pulvis et Umbra." *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882) is Stevenson's main contribution to literary criticism, and deals with "Victor Hugo's Romances," "Burns," "Walt Whitman," "Thoreau," "François Villon," "Charles of Orleans," "Pepys," and "John Knox." With this volume may be classed *Essays on the Art of Writing*, in which Stevenson analyses the rules of his own craft.

He has also written a number of poems which show that he had a delicate lyrical gift, and a remarkable purity and simplicity of style. *A Child's Garden of Verses* shows his power of envisaging the child's mind. *Underwoods* (1887) contains a section of Scottish verse which is probably the best since Burns. *Ballads* (1890), *Songs of Travel* (1896), and *New Poems* (1898), complete his contributions to poetry. It is perhaps true to say that, with the exception of *The Child's Garden*, Stevenson's poems are the work of an accomplished literary artist attempting a form which

hardly came natural to him. In addition to his published work he left a large number of letters, which rank among the best in modern literature.

The philosophy of his miscellaneous work is of the same simple and forthright kind that we have observed in his novels. It is a gospel of happiness, gaiety, and courage; but it is never trite, because, while his conclusions are simple, his observation is acute and his mind capable often of a rare subtlety. His exacting conscience is as notable in his style as in his ethical judgments. He sought purity and simplicity in language—what he has called "the piety of speech," and though this was often attained by, in his phrase, "skimming and skimming the pot," yet the labour, except in his earliest works, is never apparent. His essays are companionable books, and to read them is like listening to the talk of a fellow-traveller, wise, witty, kindly, deeply learned in the human heart, but always with something elfin in the background.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—MEREDITH: The novels are published by Constable in various editions; *Poems* (Constable, 1902), and *Letters* (2 vols., Constable, 1912).—HARDY: A complete edition of the works is published by Macmillan. *The Poetical Works* and *The Dynasts* can also be had separately.—STEVENSON: Of Stevenson's works there are four uniform editions—the Edinburgh, the Pentland, the Swanston, and the Vailima—and they can also be had in editions at various prices published by Chatto. The *Letters* are issued in 4 vols. by Methuen.—GISSING: A considerable number of his novels are out of print; but the best are published in cheap editions by Nelson.—KIPLING: There are several complete editions of his works, published by Macmillan. His poetry is issued by Methuen and by Hodder and Stoughton.—PATER: Several uniform editions of his complete works are published by Macmillan.

Studies.—G. M. Trevelyan's *The Poetry and Philosophy of Meredith* (Constable, 1906) is by far the best book. See also Mrs. Sturge Henderson's *George Meredith* (Methuen, 1907), Photiadès' *George Meredith, his Life*, etc., trans. by A. Price (Constable, 1913), and Moffatt's *George Meredith: a Primer to the Novels* (Hodder, 1909).—Lionel Johnson's *Art of Thomas Hardy* (Lane, 1895); F. A. Hedgcock's *Hardy: Essai de Critique* (Paris, 1910).—STEVENSON: There is an immense amount of criticism of Stevenson's work. The best is an essay by Henry James in his *Partial Portraits* (Macmillan, 1905), and Sir Walter Raleigh's *Stevenson* (Arnold). See also Leslie Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*, A. Lang's *Essays in Little*, and E. Gosse's *Questions at Issue*.—KIPLING. There is a *Kipling Primer* published by Chatto, and a *Kipling Dictionary* published by Routledge; see also W. M. Hart's *Kipling the Story-teller* (University of California Press, 1918). Criticism may be found in Lang's *Essays in Little* and Gosse's *Questions at Issue*.—PATER: Among critical studies of Pater may be mentioned those by E. Gosse in *Critical Kit-Kats* (Heinemann, 1896), A. Cecil in *Six Oxford Thinkers* (Murray, 1909), Professor Saintsbury in his *History of Criticism*, Vol. III. (Blackwood, 1904), John Buchan in *Brasenose College Monographs*, Vol. II. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1909). Oliver Elton's *Survey of English Literature*, 1830–80 (2 vols., Arnold, 1920), is a good general survey, and an excellent study of technique is Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (Cape, 1921).

Chapter 11. THE LANGUAGE

Vocabulary—Literary Usage—Spoken Usage—Spelling

The 19th century, or second period of Modern English, is characterized mainly by the great development which the vocabulary has undergone.

The Vocabulary has been enlarged in various ways: (1) The mechanical discoveries and inventions of the last hundred years and the advance of scientific knowledge have added largely to the technical vocabulary, and this has encouraged the coinage of " proper terms " to express scientific and intellectual ideas.

> Many of the new proper terms of science and rhetoric might well be styled inkhornisms—*cf.* enneastich, postprandial, epiphenomenalism, matutinal.

(2) The new interest in early literature and in dialect has enriched the vocabulary with native words which had fallen out of use since the 16th and 17th centuries. To these must be added archaic words revived through the literary diction of Morris, and especially through his Old English poems and translations from the Sagas.

(3) The use of class and technical slang and the adoption of colonial and American variants and colloquialisms have become widespread in the spoken and even in the literary usage.

(4) The borrowing of foreign words has increased under the influence of foreign travel, and the more widely diffused knowledge of foreign literature and thought.

The Literary Usage has become less rhetorical and has developed in closer connection with the spoken usage, becoming like it more technical. The modern stylistic development in prose and verse has been in this direction also, combining the best spoken usage with free admission both of colloquial and of technical language in literature.

The Spoken Usage.—The greater facilities of travel and communication and the general accessibility of education have spread the received usage more widely both as to class and area, and have thus rendered it more susceptible to dialectal variation. As a whole the spoken language has tended to become less formal and rhetorical, and colloquialisms and slang to be more generally employed. More formal constructions like the use of the subjunctive are in process of disappearing, and " it is I " is becoming pedantic.

In pronunciation few changes have occurred. The *o* in words like *no* (nou) has become more open, half-way to the Cockney (nau). The old pronunciation of *gold, Rome* (goold, room) indicated by the name *Gould* and the rhyme *Rome: doom* (Shakespeare, Dryden) was given up about 1830.

Queen Victoria's governess remarks that the Queen (then princess) uses the new open pronunciation in these words.

Recently the *o* has been shortened in words like *frost, cough,* and the vowel in *before* monophthongized to rhyme with *for* instead of *four*. Another old-fashioned pronunciation now dying out is that of *laundry, daunt, haunt,* etc., with *ā—cf.* Browning. *Pacchiarotto,* vi., *frescāntí : jaunty*. Some old dialect features, often heard formerly, have disappeared, such as the southern *w* for *wh,* or the Kentish confusion of *v* and *w* commemorated in *Pickwick*.

Spelling.—The spread of education has given rise to many spelling-pronunciations, especially of place-names. The question of phonetic or simplified spelling has been raised frequently in modern times, but without any widespread results, nor would it be possible without revision at regular intervals to provide any system which could remain permanently in use.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX
I. INTRODUCTORY

Chapter 1. ORIGIN AND LINGUISTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF ENGLISH

The German group of Languages—Three Main Branches: North, East, and West Germanic—The Beginnings of English

English belongs to the Germanic (Teutonic) branch of the Indo-Germanic (Indo-European) family of languages, which includes the following eight language-groups:

(1) Indo-Iranian (dialects of Indian and Persian); (2) Greek; (3) Italic (Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, and other Romance languages); (4) Celtic (Irish, Gaelic, Welsh, etc.); (5) Germanic; (6) Balto-Slavonic (Russian, Czech, Polish, Serbian, etc.); (7) Albanian (Old Illyrian); (8) Armenian.

The common descent of these languages is proved by similarity of linguistic structure, of the inflectional system, and of the primitive word-stock. The parent Indo-Germanic language had a full inflectional system, preserved to a considerable extent in Sanskrit and Greek, and was highly synthetic in its mode of expressing syntactical relations. Thus nouns had distinct inflections in seven cases, including an ablative, instrumental, and locative, and the verbal system included an active, passive, and middle voice, and a full complement of moods and tenses. Indo-Germanic had probably begun to break up into distinct dialects before 2000 B.C., since portions of the Old Indian Veda are dated as early as 1500 B.C.

The Germanic group was distinguished from the other seven branches by (1) a series of changes affecting the consonants, known as the First Sound-shift (Grimm's Law), exemplified in the correspondence of Latin *p*iscis, *p*ater, *t*u, *d*ecem, e*d*o, ager with English *f*ish, *f*a*th*er, *th*ou, *t*en (< *teh*un), ea*t*, acre; (2) the Germanic Accent-Law, which fixed the main accent of words upon the root-syllable; (3) a twofold mode of declining adjectives, as in Modern German (Strong and Weak); (4) the formation of the Weak Preterite, and general simplification of the verbal system. The Primitive Germanic inflectional system was already much simplified, partly owing to natural weakening and loss of the unstressed endings, and partly in accordance with the normal tendency of the language to develop analytic modes of expression.

Classification of the Germanic Languages.—By the 2nd century A.D. Germanic had

broken up into three main branches corresponding to the divisions of the people—North, East, and West Germanic.

(1) North Germanic: (*a*) East Norse (Swedish and Danish). (*b*) West Norse (Norwegian and Icelandic). Earliest runic inscriptions from 3rd and 4th centuries.
(2) East Germanic: Gothic (4th century Bible-translation). Probably also Vandalic and Burgundian.
(3) West Germanic: (*a*) High German (Modern German). (*b*) Low German (English, Frisian, Low German [Old Saxon], Dutch and Flemish [Old Low Franconian]). Earliest literary traces in Old English *c.* 700.

North and East Germanic have sometimes been grouped together on the basis of certain common characteristics. High German is differentiated by a Second (High German) Sound-shift of the consonants, easily seen in a comparison of German with English. English is most closely related with Frisian, and, in the second place, Dutch and Low German.

The Beginnings of English.—From 449 on, Germanic settlers from the Continent (Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians) began to invade Britain, and by the end of the 6th century the invaders were in possession of the land up to the Forth (with the exception of Wales, Cornwall, and parts of the north-west, which remained Celtic), and had imposed their language upon it. The dialects thus introduced were the forerunners of Modern English.

Name of the Language.—The early political and literary predominance of the Angles led to the use of the terms *Angelcynn* (gens Anglorum) or *Engle* (Angli) for the people, and *Englisc* for the language. Thus the West-Saxon King Alfred speaks of himself as translating "*on englisc*," and the Abbot Ælfric translates "*to engliscre spræce*." The term Anglo-Saxon is only found in the royal style ("*Angulseaxna cyning*," king of the Anglo-Saxons), and the modern usage of it, found already in Puttenham [1] and latinized by Camden as *lingua Anglo-Saxonica*, seems to have established itself in the 18th century in place of the more usual English-Saxon of the 16th and 17th centuries. The term Old English, in accordance with the precedent set by Grimm, is often now used to mark the historical continuity of the language from its beginnings.

[1] Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, iv. (1589): "So is ours at this day the Norman English. Before the Conquest of the Normans it was the Anglesaxon."

Chapter 2. PERIODS OF ENGLISH

Three Main Stages of Development : Old, Middle, and Modern English—The Literary Language—Dialects—Foreign Influences—16th to 19th centuries

The development of English falls into three main stages, Old, Middle, and Modern, distinguished by Sweet as the periods of full, levelled, and lost inflection, respectively. The periods may be subdivided as follows :

(1) Old English : Early Period *c.* 700–900; Late *c.* 900–1100. (Transition Period *c.* 1050–1150.)
(2) Middle English : Early *c.* 1100–1250 ; Middle *c.* 1250–1350 ; Late *c.* 1350–1450. (Transition Period *c.* 1400–1500.)
(3) Modern English : Early Modern (Tudor) *c.* 1450–1611 ; 17th century (Transition *c.* 1600–1660) ; 18th century (First Modern *c.* 1660–1800) ; Present day (Second Modern) *c.* 1800—.

THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

Literary Language and Dialects.—Dialectal divergences can be traced in the earliest literary records of Old English, dating back to *c.* 700. There are four distinct dialects : (1) Northumbrian, (2) Mercian, grouped together as Anglian ; (3) West-Saxon, (4) Kentish, sometimes grouped as Southern. Evidences of other varieties of Saxon also exist (Saxon patois). The early literary prominence of the north, represented in the older poetry, was checked at the end of the 8th century by the Danish invasions, and from the time of Alfred up to the Conquest West-Saxon became the literary language of England, and appears, probably in a normalized form, in the mass of Old English prose and in the later poetry.

Foreign Influences.—Old English seems to have been little influenced by the native Celtic or by Latin spoken in Britain, but *Latin* terms of civilization had already entered the West Germanic languages through early contact with the Romans, and the vocabulary was considerably enlarged in respect of terms of intellectual and religious life through the monasteries after the coming of St. Augustine in 597. In the north the *Scandinavian* settlements from the 9th century led to the development of Anglo-Scandinavian dialects, the result of which upon the vocabulary is mainly apparent after the Conquest, though some loan-words are found in Old English. *French* influence was dominant at the court of Edward the Confessor, and a few French loan-words are traced before the Conquest.

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The literary development of Old English was checked by the Norman Conquest. Although no attempt was made to repress the native language, and William the

Conqueror showed himself sympathetic towards it, there were now two speeches in the land, and the superior culture and resources of the Normans gave them the lead. Norman-French became for a time the language of the court and aristocracy,[1] and gradually took its place beside Latin for official purposes, and in the schools and universities, where it was reinforced by Continental French from the famous University of Paris. In common usage a gradual fusion of Anglo-Norman with English took place, and here, as at court, the influence of "Frenssh of Paris" was added to that of Anglo-Norman. It was not until the 15th century that French finally disappeared from the national usage.

Foreign Influences.—The influence of *French* (both Anglo-Norman and Continental) can be traced (*a*) in the *vocabulary*, where new terms of scientific knowledge and intellectual life were introduced, such terms as existed in Old English having largely fallen out of use; (*b*) in the *spelling*, remodelled on French lines; (*c*) in the *syntactical usage*. Many *Scandinavian* words were added to the vocabulary in the north and east, Norse influence extending even to the pronouns (cf. *they, their, them*), and mixed English and Norse forms, such as *give*, pointing to the close intermingling of the languages. A number of words apparently of *Low German* origin, found from 1200 on, are nearly akin to English or Danish forms, and may in many cases represent unrecorded Old English words.

Literary Language and Dialects.—The decay of literary Old English is seen in the last annals of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, written *c.* 1154. The early Middle English literature extant is scanty and dialectal in character, and until 1350 the literature is clearly representative of the main dialectal divisions of the country: (*a*) Northern, differentiated after 1350 from Lowland Scots; (*b*) Midland (East and West), reaching from the Humber to the Thames; (*c*) Southern, differentiated into (1) South-Eastern and Kentish, (2) South-Western, a shrunken survival of West-Saxon.

No standard literary usage can be traced until the later 14th century, when the London dialect (approximately East Midland)[2] began to rank as a standard, and to replace both French and Latin in the official usage and in the schools. In literature its predominance for poetry was assured by Chaucer and his school, and for prose by Wyclif (the Oxford usage being apparently modified by that of London), and by

[1] *Cf.* Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, *c.* 1297:

So þat heiemen of þis lond þat of hor blod come
Holdeþ alle þulke speche þat hii of hom (the Normans) nome.
Vor bote a man conne Frenss me telþ of him lute;
Ac lowe men holdeþ to Engliss and to hor owe speche ȝute.

[2] At the beginning of the Middle English period the London dialect was still approximately South Western, and the process of assimilation to the adjacent Eastern dialects, both Midland and Southern, was a gradual one. It is very probable that the *Ancren Riwle* and some other early South-Western texts represent the London dialect of the 12th century, and that the literary prestige of West Saxon survived to some extent, though in a steadily diminishing area, up to *c.* 1200.

15th-century writers. Thus the Middle English period is marked by the gradual triumph of English over French, and to a less degree Latin, and by the establishment of a standard usage.

MODERN ENGLISH

The 16th Century.—In England, as on the Continent, the cultivation of the vernacular as a literary medium was an outcome of the wider studies and interests of the Renaissance, while, as in Germany, it was directly furthered by the Reformation ; and the 16th century, which witnessed the appearance of successive translations of the Bible and the classics, witnessed also the steady evolution of English style through a maze of literary fashions, the fixing of the basis of modern spelling, and the beginning of linguistic study.

In 1476 Caxton set up his press at Westminster, and began to busy himself with the translation and printing of standard works, anticipating the work of the 16th century in his attempt to normalize the spelling, and to establish a standard prose which should be neither archaic, dialectal, nor pedantic, but "modern." Sixteenth-century writers were largely occupied with the same aims. The rapid increase of printed literature, the revived study of the classics and interest in contemporary foreign literature, and the discovery of new lands, all had their effect upon 16th-century English, reflected in such literary fashions as euphuism, inkhornisms, and "over-sea language," and in the great expansion of the vocabulary. The advocates of a puristic English style based on the study of Chaucer and native models were opposed by those who aimed at the imitation of the classics and the enrichment of the language by means of foreign words. Meantime, a steady development of literary style and diction may be traced from Caxton in prose, and Surrey and Wyatt in verse, culminating in the vigorous modern usage of Shakespeare, and the more conservative prose of the Authorized Version of 1611.

The 17th and 18th Centuries.—In the 17th century further development was checked for a time by national disturbances, and it was not until the end of the century that inkhorn terms and other pedantries were finally discredited, the result being evident in the new prose of the 18th century. The use of Latin as a literary medium, which Bacon advocated in mistrust of the stability of modern languages, was practically given up before 1700, and the old puristic movement manifested itself in a new campaign against foreign words, and especially against the exaggerated use of French which Butler and Dryden deplore. The proposal to found an English Academy for the purification and standardizing of the language was made in the 17th century, and urged again by Swift and Defoe. The language was held to be menaced by three dangers : the tendency to an excessive use of foreign words, the growing freedom in the use of fashionable slang, which arose in reaction from the pedantry of the preceding age, and the constantly changing, unstandardized pronunciation. The old fear that works written in so unstable a language would speedily

become unintelligible found expression in attempts to fix a standard pronunciation and spelling, and these efforts were the direct source of Johnson's Dictionary, which finally regulated English spelling. A uniform pronunciation on the basis of the educated London usage was also established towards the end of the century, and has developed slowly since 1800 in the wake of the more progressive vulgar usage.

The 19th Century.—The puristic tendencies of the 18th century gave way to the more catholic attitude of the 19th. The growing interest in other peoples and literatures, both ancient and modern, the progress in science and invention, and the development of imperialist ideals, have all combined to swell the Modern English vocabulary and to develop the possibilities of literary expression, while the widespread interest in the scientific study of language and dialect, and the general acceptance of dialect literature, have thrown open the old storehouses of the language and enabled it to draw new life and material from itself.

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II. THE BEGINNINGS

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

General View—Historical Conditions—Social and Political Organization—The Church—Libraries and Literature

The Old English literature extends from the 8th to the 12th century. Few of the MSS. in which it has come down to us are earlier than the 10th century, and though these may be copies of earlier MSS., they are probably not much later in date. This literature is extant almost entirely in the West-Saxon dialect, either Early West-Saxon of the time of King Alfred, or Late West-Saxon of the time of Ælfric (*fl.* 1006) and later. Of the literature thus handed down the earliest national poetry dates from the time when the English tribes—the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons—were still on the Continent, and it was there preserved by oral repetition, not being written down till after the settlement in Britain.

"Half-heathen" Poetry.—With the adoption of the Christian religion the pagan minstrelsy was doomed, but during the spread of Christianity and for a hundred years after its establishment—into the 9th century—the pagan temper and sentiment is observable in literature, *e.g.*, in the Elegies and the Riddles. There is a group of elegies that have been styled "half-heathen poetry," heathen in spirit with some Christian additions, as well as a series of riddles, also instinct with the old Viking spirit.

Christian Poetry.—The Old English Christian poetry, beginning in the 7th century (before the Elegies and the Riddles), is largely the work of two schools, the Cædmonian and the Cynewulfian, of which the former is the earlier in tone and feeling, the latter more subjective and lyrical, more conscious in art. Probably very little of the former is by Cædmon himself, while of the latter almost certainly four important poems, perhaps three others, and even more, are by Cynewulf. Besides these two series there are several minor Christian poems.

Prose.—Prose writing was at first in Latin. It began with Gildas, who wrote in the middle of the 6th century while the English raids were in progress; but most of it before Alfred's reign was produced in the 8th century. Canterbury and Ealdhelm (640–709) represent it in the south; Bede (673–735) and Alcuin (735–804), at Jarrow and York, in the north. Bede's only English work is lost—it was a translation of St. John's Gospel, and was not finished; but it is with Alfred's trans-

lations from the Latin of Gregory, Orosius, Bede, and Boethius, and with his own occasional original composition, that English prose begins; with Ælfric, the greatest Anglo-Saxon writer of prose, and the other homilists up to 1100, that Anglo-Saxon prose becomes more polished and literary. After that English prose decayed, and it was not till four centuries had passed that a national English prose of equal style was again in use; while, after some ballads and poems in the *Chronicle*, two patriotic poems, some didactic verses, and metrical versions of the Psalms, making up the last of the Old English poetry, English poetry ceases for nearly a century.

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

Roman Britain.—The Romans ruled Britain for 360 years, *i.e.* to A.D. 410. Side by side with their civilization the greater part of the country was forest or waste. The result in Anglo-Saxon literature was seen in the Celtic element—a love of wild nature, and in the Teutonic (after the English had settled down)—a fear of it. During the Roman period Britain had been to some extent Christianized, and British Christianity later on affected Anglo-Saxon literature.

The English Conquest.—The Picts and Scots raided Britain during the latter part of the 4th century; and early in the 5th century, when the Romans had gone, the Saxons from the mouth of the Elbe, who had raided Britain since the days of Diocletian, began to arrive in masses, at first as auxiliaries, but soon as conquerors. These strangers were Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, who after their conquest of Britain called themselves English. They were heathen, worshipping Teutonic gods, and their chief trade was war and piracy. The Jutes founded a Kentish kingdom in Kent; the South, West, and East Saxons set up kingdoms in Sussex, Wessex, and Essex; the Angles, in East Anglia, Deira, and Bernicia. All these came to conquer and to settle. They wiped out the civilization they found, stamped out Christianity, destroyed the towns and churches, and killed, enslaved, or expelled most of the Britons—at least of the male sex. The defence is reflected in the descriptions of the battles associated with Arthur; the destruction they wrought, in the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Ruin;* the feelings of the conquered, in Gildas's *History*.

Paganism Triumphant.—It was some years before the invaders created permanent settlements far inland. The East Saxons reached Verulamium, now St. Albans, which they sacked, and London, which they spared; the West Saxons pushed north-west to Old Sarum, east to London, to Oxfordshire and Deorham (Dyrham), north of Bath. Here they defeated the Britons, and cut off those of Wales from those of the south-west. The East Angles went west and south-west from Lincolnshire, and established Mercia. Northumbria, formed by the union of Deira and Bernicia, defeated the Britons of Strathclyde, took Deva (Chester) in 613, and cut off the Britons of Wales from those of Strathclyde.

Thus Britain was conquered, and paganism triumphed over Christianity. There

followed a struggle for supremacy amongst the English kingdoms, and coincidently Christianity was reintroduced.

Augustine and Canterbury.—Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory, landed in Kent (597), converted Ethelbert and his people, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. He tried, but failed, to bring the Welsh clergy of the old British Christian Church under the Roman rule. Paulinus, a priest who had come with Augustine, converted Edwin and Northumbria (627), and became Archbishop of York; but Mercia under Penda resisted Christianity, defeating Northumbria (633), and Paulinus fled south again. Oswald, who had fled to Iona, where he was converted to Christianity, succeeded Edwin; and Aidan, from Iona, founded a monastery at Lindisfarne. With Penda's death (655) the resistance to Christianity ended; British Christian missionaries from Ireland and Iona established Christianity in Northumbria, and Birinus, an Italian, from the Roman Church, converted Wessex. The Synod of Whitby (664) established the Roman as the National Church, and by 768 the rest of these islands had conformed to it. After a struggle for supremacy between Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex, Egbert of Wessex became eventually overlord of England (829).

Danish Invasions.—With an attack on Northumbria in 797 began the Danish invasions. The monasteries at Lindisfarne and Jarrow were burned; in East Anglia King Edmund was shot to death with arrows; Mercia was conquered. Wessex, under King Ethelred and his brother Alfred, resisted. Alfred was victorious at Ethandune, and by the treaty of Wedmore (878) compelled the Danes to become Christian. A second treaty seven years later allowed them to keep the country east of Watling Street—the Danelaw, where eventually they became as good Englishmen as the rest. Alfred organized his kingdom; and when in 893 another invasion took place, he waged such a struggle for four years that he drove off the enemy and gained peace till his death in 901. His son, Edward the Elder (901–24), received the submission of the Danes south of the Humber, and, says the *Chronicle*, that of Scotland, Northumbria, and Strathclyde; but in 937 his successor, Æthelstan, was attacked at Brunanburh by the Danes, Scotland, and the Norsemen of Ireland, defeated them, and united England under Wessex. Under succeeding kings, amongst whom was Edgar, overlord of England, Wales, and Scotland, Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury and latterly Archbishop of Canterbury (960), did much for art, literature, and the Church.

England under Danish Kings.—In 979 the Danish raids recommenced. At the battle of Maldon (991) the invaders defeated the East Saxons. Ethelred, called by Dunstan the "Unrede," or "Planless," tried to buy them off, and then massacred the Danish settlers in Wessex, thus provoking the vengeance of Sweyn, King of Denmark, who won a victory (1013) over Mercia and Wessex. Winchester fell, Ethelred fled to Normandy, and London submitted. Eventually Canute was left King of England and Denmark. After the reigns of his two sons, Godwin procured

the election of Ethelred's son, Edward, who reigned as Edward the Confessor from 1042 to 1066.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The social conditions of the Anglo-Saxon period were influenced in three ways —by the social and political organization and institutions, by the Christian Church, and by the Danish invasions.

Social and Political Organization.—The society set up by the English tribes was comparatively primitive. The population consisted of the free and the slaves. The free were eorls and ceorls, the former the chiefs with their "gesith" or band of warriors, the latter the tillers and workers; the slaves were captives in war, such as the Britons, and those enslaved as punishment for crime. The king and the Witan (a council of nobles) exercised a general guardianship of the kingdom; the kingdom was divided into hundreds, or groups of a hundred families, and these were presently grouped into shires. Within the hundreds were townships, and if such were large they were organized as boroughs. Each of these organizations had its moot or court to try causes.

The Christian Church.—The influence exercised by some of the kings and the great ealdormen in favour of learning and literature was exercised through the Church and clergy. The Benedictine rule, established in Italy in the 5th century by Benedict of Nursia, prescribed labour as well as prayer in the monastic life, and this was the rule brought to England by Augustine and his monks. On the general population the peaceful and self-denying lives of monks and nuns made a favourable impression. By the warrior portion the religion of the Cross was at first despised; as time went on, however, kings and warriors acquired an enthusiasm for the new creed. As the Church grew, as more bishops were appointed, and a parochial clergy arose, the example of the monks was supplemented by the discipline of the Roman system of penance, and an ideal of a spiritual life was set before the people. Education usually begins as the handmaiden of religion. We have seen and shall see further how the monasteries and the pious kings fostered learning and literature, and both in this way and from the meetings of the bishops and higher clergy of the whole of England on Church matters came an influence which tended to unity.

Libraries and Literature.—The great monasteries were the homes of the libraries, and as time went on they became more and more the homes of the schools of the country. The cosmopolitan character of the Church fostered intercourse between nations and a common interest in learning. The numerous entries in the *Chronicle* relating to journeys to Rome are of great significance. At first, in Kent and Wessex, the coming of Christianity resulted in a Latin literature, but in the north, where the new religious enthusiasm was accompanied by the emotion of national pride, and where the Celtic missionaries set the example of a vernacular literature, there a literature in English arose.

Chapter 2. HEATHEN POETRY

The Minstrel, or *Scôp*—Old Heathen Poetry—Beowulf—"Half-heathen" Poetry

General.—The oldest Teutonic poems were composed by minstrels, who sang them to the accompaniment of the harp. The minstrel, or *Scôp*, was attached to the court of a king or noble, and our epic poetry has its origins in their songs celebrating the deeds of their patrons or other famous men. The great nature myths developed into the lays and sagas about the gods, which in turn became absorbed in the hero sagas. But these sagas existed originally as separate lays, which, together with hymns, charms, and other songs, made up the poetry of the English tribes while they were still on the Continent.

The Works.—None of this heathen poetry is extant in its original form. We have some remains of the original lays embedded in *Beowulf* (myths and stories of heroes—*e.g.*, at the beginning, the Scyld myth, later, another part of the Finnsburg story); the *Fight at Finnsburg*, a fragment of a saga about Finn, King of the Frisians (all that remains of a series of sagas dealing with events within a hundred and fifty years from the time of the great migrations of the latter part of the 4th century A.D.); *Waldhere*, two fragments of the story of Walther of Aquitaine, contemporary with the Teutonic Theodoric cycle; *Widsith* (the Far Voyager), a lay of the 5th century containing fragments of earlier matter and also later additions; the lyric *Complaint of Deor;* and, lastly, the *Charms*, in which heathen incantations have been revised into Christian prayers. These are all English poetry, but full of allusions to the Teutonic sagas.

Narrative.—*The very vigorous "Fight at Finnsburg," as well as the episode in "Beowulf," refers to events in the middle of the 5th century. Hnæf, a vassal of the Danish king Healfdene, had gone on a visit to the North Frisians, whose king, Finn, had married Hnæf's sister Hildeburh. Hnæf is killed, but his followers, led by a young prince, perhaps Hengest (who is possibly that Hengest who founded Kent), defend the hall in which they are held. They fight for five days, and at last Finn has to make peace. They stay during the winter in Finn's service, though eager for vengeance. At last two of them slay Finn and return to Denmark with Hildeburh and their spoil. The "Fight at Finnsburg" narrates the defence of the hall; the lay in "Beowulf" is sung by the Scôp at Heorot, and gives the rest of the story.*

BEOWULF

But the great relic of our early national poetry is the epic *Beowulf*. The poem, of 3,183 lines, is in West-Saxon, but was originally composed in a northern or midland

dialect. There are many theories as to the originals and composition of the poem. It probably developed into a saga in Northumbria or Mercia in the 7th century, and perhaps parts of it received epic form thus early; then in the 8th century it attained its present unity with the central heroic figure of Beowulf, and at the same time acquired its Christian element.

Most of the characters and the events in *Beowulf* are mentioned in history or legend, chiefly in the Scandinavian stories. Beowulf himself, according to some, is historical, a warrior of one of the kings of Denmark. The chief historical events occurred early in the 6th century. The poem is "a mixture of the folk tale, the nature myth, the heroic legend, and the poet's imagination of a noble character."

Narrative.—*The poem opens with an account of the ancestry of Hrothgar, King of the Danes. This warlike prince builds a great hall, Heorot; but the monster Grendel, grudging the happiness that he hears in the hall, comes nightly and slays Hrothgar's thegns. No sacrifice or prayer avails for twelve years to rid Heorot of this pest, till Beowulf, a thegn of Hygelac, King of the Geatas (South Sweden), hears of it, and with fourteen comrades sails to Denmark. He is welcomed by the king, and offers to slay the monster. He watches in the hall while his men sleep. Grendel bursts in and devours one of the men; Beowulf wrenches off the arm of the monster, who escapes. Next day at the feast the queen presents him with a splendid collar. That night some knights are asleep in the hall when the mother of Grendel comes and carries off the king's counsellor, Æschere. Beowulf now seeks out the monster's lair, a gloomy mere running down to the sea. He dives down till he finds a cave, where he kills Grendel's mother, finds Grendel's body, and returns with his head. Next day, loaded with gifts, he departs, and on reaching the land of the Geatas, tells Hygelac of his adventures, gives him the gifts, and receives from him a sword and a share in the kingdom. The next events take place after more than fifty years. Hygelac and Heardred his son have been slain, and Beowulf has been King of the Geatas for fifty years. A fire-breathing dragon guarding an ancient treasure is ravaging the land. Beowulf resolves to destroy it. Leaving his men in the rear, he approaches the barrow, the dragon emerges, and a fierce fight ensues. Beowulf's sword edge is turned, and the dragon attacks him. His thegns flee except Wiglaf. His sword breaks, and the dragon seizes him by the neck. Then Wiglaf wounds the dragon, and Beowulf dispatches it; but he is mortally wounded. The warriors return, and Beowulf's body is burnt, and there is a great mourning.*

"HALF-HEATHEN" POETRY

While Christianity was spreading in England, and for a century after—that is, during the 7th–9th centuries—there still remained much of the heathen temper and sentiment, and this is exemplified in some of the poems of the *Exeter Book*, and in

many of the *Riddles*. *The Ruin, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, The Wife's Complaint,* and *The Husband's Message* are elegies of this kind : there is nothing Christian in them except two or three additions to the *Wanderer* and the *Seafarer*, and there is much of the pagan Fate and of pagan love of wild nature. The *Riddles*, which some claim to be by Cynewulf, describe the natural scenes and the activities of the daily life of those times—war, hunting, feasting, and the like.

Narrative.—*" The Ruin " is a lament on the departed glories of some ruined buildings or a ruined city. " The Wanderer "* (115 *lines*) *tells of a man wandering lonely over the sea; he dreams of his former happy life. " The Seafarer " shows a man musing upon the hard times he has passed on the sea in winter; but no home pleasures avail against the strong attraction the seaman's life has for him. " The Wife's Complaint " and " The Husband's Message " are probably connected. The wife complains of separation from her husband, who has gone beyond the sea. " The Husband's* (*or perhaps Lover's*) *Message " seems to be sent to the woman on a runic staff; he wants her to sail to him across the sea when spring comes.*

Chapter 3. CHRISTIAN POETRY

Northumbrian Culture—The two Schools of Christian Poetry—Cædmon and the Cædmonian Poems—Cynewulf and his School—Minor Poems and Fragments—Poetry after Alfred

Literary culture in England began in Northumbria. Columba founded the monastery of Iona in 563, bringing thither the learning and literature of Ireland; and after the flight of the Roman bishop Paulinus in 633 it was Celtic missionaries from Iona who carried on the conversion of Northumbria to Christianity. Here, as throughout England, Christianity and heathenism existed side by side, and so it came about that in many respects Christianity did not so much destroy the heathen ideas in English literature as change them. To take two examples: Christianity modified the deep melancholy of Old English elegiac poetry, adding to it the note of hope; but the ancient Teutonic fury colours the Old Testament battle stories. The heroes are those of the Bible stories and of the legends of the saints, but treated as if they were kings or chiefs and thegns of the pagan English, though with a subjective and more spiritual tone due to the influence of Celtic Christianity.

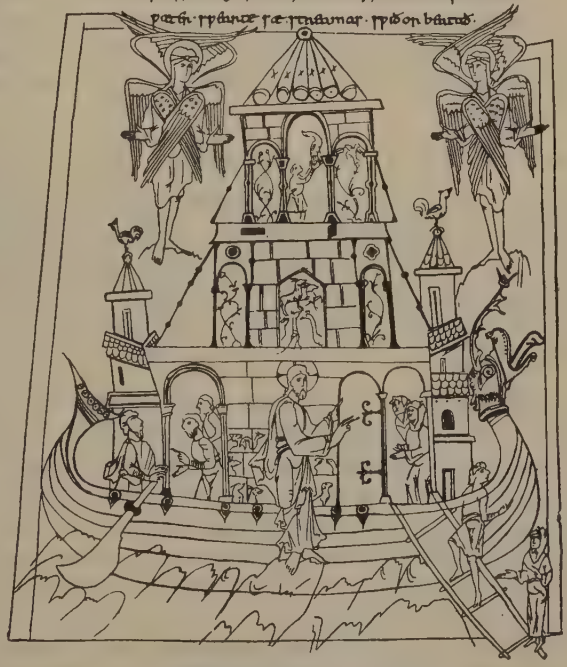
The Two Schools.—This Christian poetry is of two periods. That of the school of Cædmon includes the end of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th. The other group is that of the school of Cynewulf, who wrote at the end of the 8th century. In both these cycles the poetry varies from the strictly religious tone—often reflecting the monkish attitude—in which pagan sentiments are rigidly repressed, to the freer and more pagan feeling and expression of the earlier age. The difference between them is seen in the more lyrical work of Cynewulf, whether song or description of nature, and in the greater influence of foreign literature, as, for instance, in the *Riddles*, the *Phœnix*, and the *Crist*, where the writer seems more conscious of his art.

CÆDMON AND THE CÆDMONIAN POEMS

The Christian poetry begins with Cædmon, about the year 660. He was a lay brother in the abbey of Streoneshalh (later known by its Danish name of Whitby), whose foundation was due to the missionaries from Iona, and on the Celtic model. Bede, his contemporary, tells how he received the divine gift of poetry late in life in consequence of a dream. He had never been able to take his turn in playing or singing at the banquet, and used to withdraw when he saw the harp approaching him. On one such occasion he had gone out to the stables, and falling asleep he dreamed that a man stood by him who said, "Cædmon, sing me something." And

when he told the visitant that he had come out because he could not sing he received the answer, "Yet you could sing!" "What shall I sing?" he returned. "Sing to me the beginning of all things." Finding that he had the true poetic power, the Abbess Hild persuaded him to become a monk, and in the abbey he spent the rest of his life, telling in verse the Scripture history, the Judgment Day, and the kingdom of Heaven.

Between Cædmon's death in 680 and Bede's in 735, followers of Cædmon continued his work, but, says Bede, "none could compare with him." The Cædmonian poems were for long, on the authority of the first editor, Franciscus Junius, attributed to Cædmon. The Hymn in praise of God, the builder of the world, which he sang to the heavenly visitant, the oldest piece of Christian song we have left, has been preserved in Northumbrian and in West-Saxon. It is generally admitted to be Cædmon's own composition. The other poems of the group are *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, *Crist and Satan*, and, as some think, *Judith*, though the last is probably a work of the 9th or the early 10th century.



A Page of Cædmon's Hymn.
(From an MS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.)

The "Genesis" is a paraphrase of the story up to Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. After the creation of the earth, lines 235–851 *(called "Genesis B") are a repetition of the fall of the angels. It is an anglicized version of part of an Old-Saxon paraphrase of the Old Testament by the author of the "Heliand," and was probably known to Milton. The rest ("Genesis A") may be based on Cædmon, and the date is uncertain.*

"Exodus" opens with a reference to the laws of Moses, his leadership against Pharaoh, and God's revelation to him about the creation. It paraphrases the

story from the tenth plague to the overwhelming of the Egyptians, Moses' song of victory, and the division of the spoil.

"Daniel."—A short historical introduction connects the story with "Exodus," and then follows a paraphrase of the Book of Daniel down to Belshazzar's feast, with some moralizing on certain virtues.

The "Crist and Satan" (probably late 9th-century work) consists of a complete poem on the "Fall of the Rebel Angels," and two fragments dealing with the "Harrowing of Hell," the "Resurrection," "Ascension," and "Second Coming," and with the "Temptation."

"Judith" consists of fourteen lines of Book IX. and the whole of Books X. to XII.; of an original twelve books narrating the story of the Book of Judith in the Apocrypha. The fragment contains the climax of the story —the assassination of Holofernes by Judith, and the rout of the Assyrians. The narrative is clear, vigorous, and dramatic. The poem has been variously assigned to the 8th, the 9th, and the 10th centuries; to the schools of Cædmon and of Cynewulf, and to the later patriotic group.

CYNEWULF AND HIS SCHOOL

The poetry of the Cynewulfian school is more artistic, more self-conscious and more subjective; and in contrast to the poems of the Cædmonian school we find legends of saints and martyrs, and accounts of heavenly visions, Christ presented as the Saviour of men, and the atmosphere of the New Testament. Celtic influence is giving place to Roman. Cynewulf himself has real poetic imagination.

Cynewulf.—Cynewulf was a Northumbrian or a Mercian, but we have the poems in a West-Saxon transcript. The titles of four of his poems—*Crist, Juliana, The Fates of the Apostles, Elene*—spell his own name in runic letters. If the *Riddles* are his it may be conjectured that he was the *Scôp* of a great chief, a lover of nature, especially the sea and sea-coast, a student of the life of this world. The *Juliana* shows him as one who has suffered sorrows and has repented of sin; the *Crist*, one who has felt divine forgiveness and is at peace, and the last canto of the *Elene* confirms this conjecture.

The *Crist* is in three parts—Advent, Ascension, Second Coming—and critics argue that only the second (signed) is by Cynewulf. They are based on Latin sermons and hymns; but the author has made a new work of his own, with lyrical expression of deep religious feeling and sublime description.

The *Juliana* is a version of the Latin story of St. Juliana, a virgin martyr of the time of Maximian, a story following the usual lines of this type.

The Fates of the Apostles may be an introduction to the *Andreas*. It describes the apostles as "æthelings going forth to war," and is a summary of their work.

The *Elene* is Cynewulf's masterpiece. In the first fourteen cantos, the narrative, which is full of life and colour, tells in simple and dramatic style the search for and discovery of the True Cross by Helena, mother of Constantine. The fifteenth canto tells how God had revealed to the author the mystery of the holy Cross.

The *Dream of the Rood* may have been based on an older poem of the Rood, parts of which (in 7th-century language) are carved in runes on the Ruthwell Cross in Dumfriesshire. It is the only English dream-poem we possess before the Conquest.

> *The poet dreams he sees the Tree gloriously bedight with gold and gems, and anon running with blood. At the sight he gazes long with heavy heart, till at last the Tree speaks. It narrates its origin, the passion and burial of Christ, its own burial and later discovery. It bids the sleeper tell the dream. He who bears the Cross in his heart need have no fear of the Judgment to come. The poet now recalls how glad he had been after the dream, how eager to depart this life, but how he had lived on till now his friends have gone before and he is awaiting the call. He remembers how Christ had ascended gloriously into the heavens with the saints from Hades.*

Guthlac and the Phœnix.—Two other works of importance are claimed for Cynewulf—a life of the Mercian saint, Guthlac, and *The Phœnix*. *Guthlac* is an unfinished poem. Describing the triumphant death of the saint, he uses the old heroic style; the nature myths help the description of scenery; the fight with Death and Satan is in the spirit and language of heathen war.

In the same heroic strain is the fragment of a *Descent into Hell*: Christ welcomed at the gate of Hell by John the Baptist and the other "spirits in prison" is the Old English chieftain acclaimed after victory by his thegns.

The Phœnix follows, for 380 lines, a Latin poem by Lactantius Firmianus (4th century), and describes the fair land of the Phœnix, the wondrous life of the bird there for a thousand years, its flight to Syria, its fiery death, the rebirth and return to its land for another thousand years. The remaining 297 lines are allegory—the immortality of Christian souls and the resurrection of Christ. In this poem we have imagination and joy in nature as well as conscious artistic effort, under the influence of Latin literature.

Andreas.—The *Andreas*, a poem of 1,724 lines, is based on the Latin version (lost) of a Greek MS. in Paris. It is the story of the voyage of Andrew to free Matthew from the cannibal Mermedonians in the Crimea, or, as the English poet seems to think, in Ethiopia. Christ appears to Andrew, and with two angels accompanies him in a boat. Andrew lands, rescues Matthew, is himself captured and tortured, is delivered, and converts the Mermedonians by a miracle. The voyage is the great work of the poem. Here and throughout it is the Old English life and spirit—Andrew is a Viking, Christ is his chief, the Mermedonians are the enemy.

Beast Allegories.—*The Panther*, *The Whale*, and *The Partridge* are perhaps portions of an Old English *Physiologus*, or allegorical bestiary. The description of the animal is followed by an allegory upon it—*e.g.* the Panther is Christ, the Whale is Satan.

Riddles.—The *Riddles* are ninety-five in number, perhaps originally a hundred. There were various collections of riddles in Latin. The eighty-sixth is in Latin, and has the name Lupus in it, perhaps as Cynewulf's signature. The riddles are from four to a hundred lines long; they describe scenes, events, persons, animals, familiar English objects of the time, with poetic imagination—*e.g.* the iceberg, the ploughing, the wandering singer, the swain.

MINOR POEMS AND FRAGMENTS

Several minor poems remain to be noticed. Cuthbert, in a famous letter to Cuthwin, Bishop of the East Angles (*c.* 750), gives a Latin version of a *Death Song* which he says his master, Bede, composed. It belongs to the period of Cædmon's Hymn. *The Address of the Lost Soul to the Body*, *The Address of the Saved Soul to the Body* (a fragment), and the *Last Judgment* form a group of similar subjects. *The Gifts of Men*, *The Fates of Men*, *The Mind of Man*, and *The Falsehood of Man* are short poetical sermons based on prose homilies. The gifts include hunting, seamanship, drinking, and dicing. *The Fates* is on the theme "The child—what will he become?"

Riming Song.—The *Riming Song* is unique in English poetry for the regular use of head-rhyme and end-rhyme in the same poem. The subject is the remembrance in sadness of happier days.

Gnomic Verses.—The rest of the minor poems are didactic. The *Gnomic Verses* or *Proverbs* consist of maxims and descriptions; *A Father's Instruction*, which has been compared to the Proverbs of Solomon; *The Rune Song*, on the meanings of the names of the twenty-nine runes; and *Saloman and Saturn*, a dialogue in alliterative verse.

POETRY AFTER ALFRED

With the Danish destruction of the abbeys north of the Humber Northumbrian poetry ceased. The centre of learning now was Wessex, where Alfred was directly responsible for the revival of literature and the promotion of education. The 10th and 11th centuries are notable as the greatest period of Old English prose. Most of the little verse we have deals with contemporary events, or is suggested by them.

Judith.—To the 10th century may be referred *Judith*, noticed above; if, as has been conjectured, it was written in honour of Æthelflæd of Mercia and her

freeing of the Five Boroughs, its probable date is 918. There remain the *Battle of Maldon;* several poems and passages of poetry inserted in the *Chronicle;* the *Menologium,* or poetical calendar; *Domes Dæge,* a very fine and beautiful expanded version of *De Die Judicii,* said to be by Bede or by Alcuin; a hortatory poem called *Lār;* and some 11th-century metrical versions of the Psalms.

The Battle of Maldon.—*The Battle of Maldon* celebrates the death in 991 of Bryhtnoth the Ealdorman, kinsman of Ælfric's friend and patron Æthelmær, while fighting at Maldon on the Blackwater to repel the new invasion of the Northmen. A few lines at the beginning and end are lost. The Vikings are on an island in the river. Bryhtnoth has marshalled his men on the bank, when the enemy's herald offers peace and withdrawal in return for tribute. He scornfully refuses. The tide comes in and delays the battle. Then Bryhtnoth allows the Norsemen to cross to the bank. In the fierce fighting Bryhtnoth is slain, calling on the rest to continue the resistance. His chief thegns fall too. Many of the English flee to the woods. Ælfwine rallies the remnants, and is supported by Offa and Dunmere. The narrative ends while the English thegns are still falling.

The poem is minute in detail, full of patriotic fervour, and very dramatic. It gives a graphic picture of courageous and faithful comradeship in war, and in it we see reflected the troubled times of Æthelred.

Poems in the Chronicle.—*The Battle of Brunanburh* (937) is the first poem in the *Chronicle.* This fine lyrical poem celebrates Æthelstan's victory over the Danes, the Welsh, and the Scots. The tone is noble and enthusiastic. There are some nine or ten other sets of verses in the *Chronicle,* but none equal to this.

Chapter 4. BRITISH AND ENGLISH WRITERS IN LATIN TO THE TIME OF ALFRED

British Writers: Gildas and Nennius—English Men of Letters: Ealdhelm, Bede, and Alcuin

Gildas.—Gildas the Wise, born *c.* A.D. 500, lived in the west of England. He wrote, *c.* 547, his *Liber Querulus*, dealing with the destruction and conquest of Britain by the English (see p. 622).

Nennius.—Another work, *Historia Britonum*, is a compilation about Britain and some notable Britons—*e.g.* St. Patrick—made by a Briton (*c.* 679), and with later additions, edited (*c.* 800) by Nennius (see p. 622).

In the South: Ealdhelm.—The first great English writer of Latin was Ealdhelm, one of the chief pupils of the school established by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and his deacon Hadrian. The Roman Church, in the south, encouraged Latin. Although Ealdhelm wrote some songs in English, his chief work was in Latin: (*a*) *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, in prose; (*b*) a version of (*a*) in hexameters; (*c*) the *Letter to Acircius* (Aldfrith, King of Northumbria), containing a hundred riddles in verse and a prose treatise on metre, etc.; (*d*) a number of letters, to abbesses and nuns, foreign monasteries, kings, etc.

Ealdhelm lived chiefly at Malmesbury, but died in 709, Bishop of Sherborne. He had several imitators in the south and west of England, such as Tatwin, Æthilwald (Ethelbald), and Boniface.

In the North.—When Paulinus baptized Edwin in 627, Latin literature had its beginning in York, but ceased for the time with Edwin's death and the flight of Paulinus; for when, under Oswald in 634, Christianity was revived, it was under the Celtic Church, which fostered a vernacular literature. The decision of the Synod of Whitby (664), which finally established in the north the rule of Rome, again resulted in the growth of Latin literature in Northumbria. In 674 and 682 were founded by Benedict Biscop the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, which had considerable libraries.

Bede.—The greatest writer of the period is Bede, called the Venerable. He was born *c.* 673. At the age of seven he was placed under the charge of Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth, and not long after was transferred to Jarrow, where he spent the rest of his life and died in 735. The beautiful and vivid story of his death which Cuthbert tells, is as well known as that of the call of Cædmon which he himself tells in his *History*. Bede was a voluminous writer on all the learning

of his time. His chief work, and his best, popular on the Continent as well as in England, is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (731), from Julius Cæsar to 731, chiefly from the coming of Augustine. For the earlier history he uses numerous authorities, and weighs his material in the true historical spirit. For later times he consults contemporaries and acquaintances of the men he writes about. He added the note of his own charming personality, whether in his charitable yet sure estimate of persons or his graceful narration of scenes, such as that of Paulinus and Edwin of Northumbria, which contains the arresting simile of the sparrow flying through the lighted hall. Perhaps his last writing was the letter to Egbert of York, a pastoral epistle which shows his deep interest in and insight into the social and religious life of the time. The only English work written by Bede that we know of is lost; it was an unfinished translation of St. John's Gospel.

Alcuin.—Egbert, Bede's pupil, became Archbishop of York; and York, at Bede's death, became the chief school of Northumbria, with a library rivalling that of Rome, a wide range of studies, and students from Ireland and western Europe. Egbert and, on his death, Ælberht, assisted by his friend Alcuin or Ealhwine, developed this European centre of learning. Alcuin was a very fine scholar, and his help in organizing the education of his empire was sought by Charlemagne; he therefore left England to spread through English scholars and books the learning of England on the Continent, and that just when the Scandinavian invasions were beginning to destroy literature in Northumbria, as they had ruined learning in Wessex and Mercia. Alcuin died in 804. His works were written chiefly on the Continent, many of them works of controversial theology. Of his letters, his best historical and literary remains, written to Charlemagne and others, 300 still exist, and show the important influence he had.

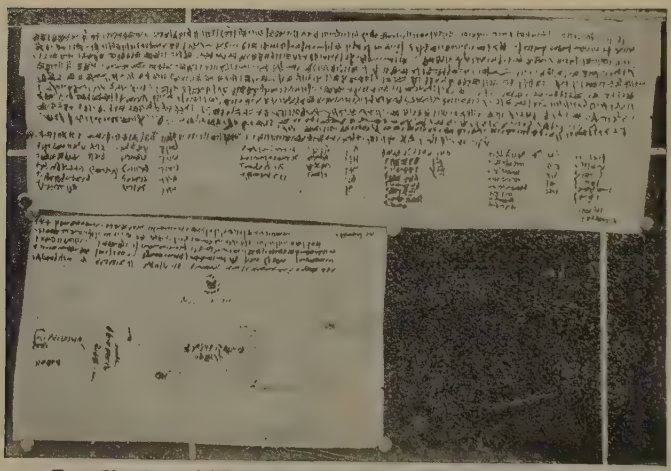
Other Latin Writings.—Amongst the other Latin writings are various lives of saints, several apocalyptic visions, and some devotional works.

Chapter 5. OLD ENGLISH PROSE

Alfred the Great: his Educational Activities; his Translations of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Orosius, Bede, Boethius, etc.—The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—Ælfric and the Homilists—Wulfstan and others

ALFRED

Alfred at his accession told Pope Gregory that there were few south of the Humber who could render the service-book into English, and fewer north of it. For England, lost to learning through the Danish invasions, he did what Charlemagne, with the aid of English scholars from Northumbria, had once done for his kingdoms; and as the result of his labours Wessex became, in succession to Northumbria, the centre of learning. He has been called the greatest of our kings; he led his country victoriously against the Danes, established laws, fostered learning, and set a high example of religion and piety. Visiting Rome as a boy, and, on his homeward journey, the court of Charles the Bald, he received impressions that greatly influenced him in his work for the revival of letters in England.



Two Charters of King Alfred, one signed "Aluredus Dux," the other "Aluredus Rex."
(*British Museum.*)

The sources of our knowledge about Alfred are his own works, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and a *Life* by Asser. Asser was a Welsh cleric of St. Davids whom Alfred prevailed upon to spend with him six months of each year after 886, and to help him in the study of Latin. He became Bishop of Sherborne, and outlived Alfred by ten years.

In 887 Alfred began to compile a *Handbook*, now lost, chiefly extracts from the Vulgate and the Fathers. Next year he had it translated into English for the people to read. Perhaps in the same year, more probably about five years later, he edited and wrote the preface to his *Law Book*.

Gregory's "Pastoral Care."—His first real literary work was the translation (889) of Pope Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*, or in English (as Alfred says in his Preface) *Hierdebōc* (Herdsman's Book). This handbook for Christian priests was suited to Alfred's purpose, the revival of learning amongst the clergy, and for his translation he sought the help (again, see the Preface) of Archbishop Plegmund, Bishop Asser, and the priests Grimbald and John. The Preface is the first original English prose of great literary value. In it Alfred sadly recounts the decay of learning, exhorts the bishops to foster it, states his intention to revive it, apologizes for the use of English, and says that he is sending a copy to every bishop.

Orosius.—Whether Alfred's next translation was that of Orosius's *Universal History* or of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is doubtful. Orosius was a Spanish disciple of Augustine, and his work, written early in the 5th century, was then the chief authority. Again with an educational aim, Alfred wished his people to have the historical and geographical knowledge the book contained. He deals very freely with his material, and adds much original matter. The voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan in the Baltic and to the White Sea, which he had at first hand from those early explorers, breathe the very spirit of English sea adventure.

Bede's "History."—Less freely, and with the omission of many chapters, he translates (890–891) Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Anglorum*. The oft-quoted account of the origin of English poetry in Cædmon and his hymn about the Creation is a fine piece of early English prose.

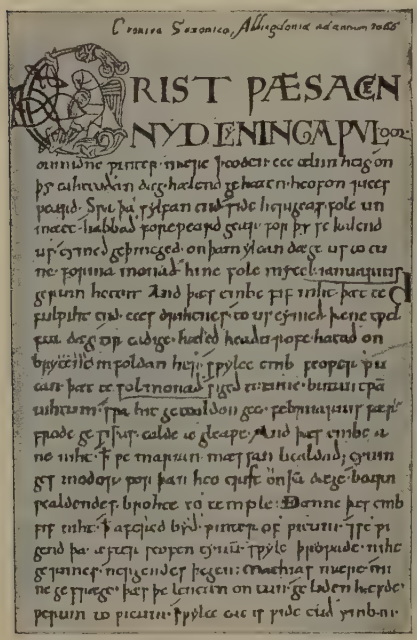
Boethius.—The last effort of the Danes was made in 893–97, and after a severe struggle Alfred was victorious. The Danish fleet was captured in 897.

About that year Alfred translated the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boethius (475–525), a famous scholar and writer, a translator of many works of Greek learning, and a senator of the court of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric. Through his enemies he fell from favour, and was imprisoned, tortured, and executed. During his imprisonment he wrote the *De Consolatione*. It is a dialogue between Boethius and his guardian Philosophy, appearing to him as a woman. A sympathy of mind leads sometimes to Alfred's identifying himself with Boethius in the dialogue. He also to a great extent christianizes the ideas and expressions.

Augustine's "Soliloquies."—Probably by Alfred is the West-Saxon version of Augustine's *Soliloquia*, a treatise on God and the nature and future of the soul.

Gregory's "Dialogues."—A West-Saxon translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* was made at Alfred's request by Werferth, Bishop of Worcester. It supplements the current lives of the saints with accounts of Italian saints and their miracles.

Other Works.—A *Martyrology* is by an unknown writer, but was written in Alfred's reign. William of Malmesbury says that Alfred began a translation of the *Psalms*. In the Paris National Library there is an 11th-century MS. containing an Old English prose translation of the first fifty Psalms, and an alliterative verse translation of the rest. The style of the prose suggests Alfred's authorship. He probably did not write the *Proverbs of Alfred*, a book on *Falconry*, or a translation of Æsop's *Fables*, all of which have been attributed to him.



A Page of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle."
(British Museum.)

Alfred's Style.—In his writings Alfred shows his own personality: his nature, his thoughts, his wide sympathies, his deep interests, especially for his people, and his religious soul. His original composition is weighty and full of life, and the style of his writing is far less rugged than the earlier prose, though it is not so finished as that of the next period, for which, however, it lays a foundation. Happily, by his translation he brought a considerable Latin element into Old English prose.

THE CHRONICLE

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the beginning of history in our vernacular. The monks used to write brief notices of contemporary or recent events; it was probably at Winchester that this was first done in English, and from the *Winchester Chronicle* the other MSS. have been derived. In Æthelwulf's reign, or soon afterwards, under a strong national impulse, the annals were revised—gaps were filled, and new entries made. But about 891, when there was a lull in the Danish struggle, Alfred had a recension made, with additions from Bede and the Latin writers, and he filled in the years from 866, a part which is more consecutive in idea, more firm in style, more full and continuous in treatment. The *Chronicle* is an undertaking which is ascribed to Alfred; his work on it ends with the year 891. There is no entry for 892; but the narrative for 893–97, the new Danish invasion, is a fine example of Old English prose. From 897 to 910 there is a reversion to the older style; then a good writer again takes it up, till 924, when it again becomes meagre. The *Peterborough Chronicle* carries on the narrative seventy years longer than any other, viz., to 1154.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a record of lawless times, of ruin, of portents, right through the long epoch of the Danish wars, and so on to the end: the famous entry for 1137, the last but three, movingly describes the wretchedness of the people in the civil wars of Stephen's reign.

The MSS.—The MSS. vary in details, but not in the main account. They are by many hands and in unequal style, from the bald statement of an event to larger entries in good narrative prose. Several patriotic and historical poems, to which reference has already been made, are inserted in the 10th and 11th centuries, and, with two or three exceptions, are all the poetry of that period.

ÆLFRIC AND THE HOMILISTS

The monastic houses, despite Alfred's efforts, were still in a very bad state at his death, and so continued for the first half of the century; the clergy were worldly and unlearned. With the monastic reform of the Benedictines learning began to improve. Edgar began to reign in 957. Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, who had been banished by Edwy, was recalled, and made Archbishop of Canterbury. In 961 Oswald, nephew of Odo, late Archbishop of Canterbury, became Bishop of Worcester, and in 963 Æthelwold, Abbot of Abingdon, became Bishop of Winchester. During Edgar's reign, and in those of his sons Edward the Martyr and Ethelred the Unrede, the monasteries founded or restored numbered forty. Æthelwold drew up a version of the *Benedictine Rule* for the English monks and secular canons, and afterwards, at Edgar's instance, translated it into English.

The Blickling Homilies.—The *Blickling Homilies* (Blickling Hall, Norfolk) were composed *c.* 971, and were due to the work of Dunstan, Æthelwold, and their followers. They exhort to repentance—the Judgment Day is at hand (it was a common belief that the world would end in the year 1000). They are weak in theology; in style they form a transition from Alfred to Ælfric.

Ælfric.—Winchester, Alfred's capital, and, as we have seen, the birthplace of the *Chronicle*, has another claim in this period. Here was founded by Æthelwold the most famous of the schools of this ecclesiastical revival, a school to which went Ælfric, the greatest writer of English prose before the Conquest. He was born in 955, and was a postulant at Winchester in 971. He was ordained deacon and priest, and after Æthelwold's death in 984 his successor, Ælfheah, sent him in 987 to Cerne Abbey, to be master of the novices and give instruction in the Benedictine rule. While here he determined to make translations from the Latin to help him in his work of Christian teaching. He returned to Winchester *c.* 990. Between 990 and 993 he composed the first series of his *Homilies*, and before 995 the second series. He also before 996 wrote an Anglo-Saxon *Latin Grammar*, a Latin-English

Vocabulary, and a Latin *Colloquy*. His third series of homilies, on the lives of the saints, followed about 997. He is also credited with three translations: of Alcuin's *Interrogationes Sigewulfi Presbyteri in Genesin*, of St. Basil's *Hexameron*, and of Bede's *De Temporibus*. He next, *c.* 998, made a homiletic paraphrase of the first seven books of the Bible, and three others on the Books of *Job*, *Esther*, and *Judith*; and about the same time he composed a pastoral for Wulfsige, Bishop of Sherborne, and a translation of St. Basil's *Advice to a Spiritual Son*. A homily, *On the Sevenfold Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, may also be by Ælfric. He now left Wessex to be abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Eynsham, in Mercia (Oxfordshire), where, in 1005, he wrote in Latin a *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*; soon afterwards (*c.* 1006), his *Vita Æthelwoldi*; and a letter in English to Wulfgeat, a thane at Ilmington. Perhaps in 1009 he wrote his treatise *De Veteri et de Novo Testamento*, and a letter to Sigferth. Between 1014 and 1016 belongs his pastoral letter, written in Latin for Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, and translated by himself soon afterwards. He died *c.* 1020.

Ælfric's Character and Work.—His character was lofty, charitable, and of a singular attractiveness. He loved England, and sought earnestly the good of the Church, the king, and the people. Believing that learning was the handmaiden of religion and morality, he was not only a zealous Churchman, but a devoted teacher. He was not an original thinker; but he was keenly interested in Western theology and Continental learning generally, and made it available to his own country. He was the greatest English writer on theology between the 10th and the 15th centuries. In the reformed monasteries not only theology but mathematics, medical science, and natural philosophy were studied. His work made easier the labours of the great Churchmen of the succeeding century.

Ælfric's Style.—Ælfric's is a more finished literary prose than that of Alfred or the earlier homilists. He avoids the Latin constructions so common amongst the homilists, his simpler and clearer style being due to his earnest desire to be understood by the people; in his later manner he became more rhetorical, but this alliterative and rhythmical prose was also due to his desire to reach their ears. Everywhere we feel the persuasiveness of the zealous teacher.

Wulfstan.—Next in importance to Ælfric amongst the homilists is Wulfstan, whose more pointed and strenuous style reflects the more active and practical part he took in affairs. He was Bishop of Worcester, and also (1002) Archbishop of York. He died in 1023. A large number of homilies have been ascribed to him, but only five are certainly his. Of these, the *Address to the English* is famous; in it he tells of the Danish invasions, lays the blame upon the wickedness and cowardice of the English, and threatens them with the fate of the Britons. It is a passionate call to repentance.

Byrhtferth.—Another homilist is Byrhtferth (*c.* 980), a monk of Canterbury, who also wrote in Latin commentaries on Bede, some essays, and a life of Dunstan, as well as divers mathematical works. There exist isolated homilies by unknown writers, some of which are supposed to be Ælfric's.

The Gospels.—There are three English versions of the Gospels belonging to the 10th century. Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, wrote, *c.* 700, the extant beautiful MS. of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. This Latin text was interlineated with a North-umbrian gloss by Aldred, a priest of Chester-le-Street, *c.* 950. The *Rushworth Gospels*, 8th century, were similarly interlineated between 950 and 1000, partly in North-Mercian by a priest near Leeds, and partly in South-Northumbrian by a scribe of that district. The third version is in West-Saxon of the late 10th century.

Amongst the Old English prose of the time are versions of certain sacred legends —of the Holy Rood, of a letter sent from Heaven on the observance of Sunday; and others of a secular character—*Letter from Alexander to Aristotle from India, Wonders of the East*, and *Apollonius of Tyre*,—tales from the East foreshadowing the mediæval romances. The scientific works include a *Leech Book*, the *Herbarium Apuleii*, and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*.

Old English Prose.—In these works may be seen the development of English prose. It is at first abrupt and rugged, though at its best dramatic and telling; it becomes a clear, straightforward, simple, unadorned style, capable of weight, dignity, and great force, in the hands of a man of Alfred's personality; and Ælfric made it lighter, more harmonious, more flexible. As might be expected when the matter is so largely taken from Latin, we get certain elements of Latin style, though on the whole our early prose is not an imitation, but a native product.

The Norman Conquest.—There had been no literature in Europe to equal the Anglo-Saxon in the 8th and 9th centuries; and in the 10th, when literature had almost perished from the Continent, Dunstan and Ælfric and their followers had kept it alive in England. With the Norman Conquest there occurs an abrupt change. There is a break in continuity; and when the vernacular literature again appears it is transformed both in matter and spirit.

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Chapter 6. THE LANGUAGE—OLD ENGLISH PERIOD (*c.* 700–1100)

Old English Dialects—The Oldest Texts—The Alphabet, Pronunciation, and General Characteristics

The earliest extant specimens of English date from the end of the 7th century, about 200 years after the spoken language was introduced. Three linguistic periods of Old English may thus be distinguished: (1) Prehistoric; (2) Early Historic, from the earliest records to *c.* 900; (3) Late Historic, *c.* 900–1100.

Old English Dialects.—The area over which the Anglian dialects of Northumbrian and Mercian were spoken was originally co-extensive with the old kingdoms of Northumbria (from the Humber to the Forth) and Mercia (from the Humber to the Thames), but after Alfred's victories over the Danes, the southern dialect of West-Saxon was extended north of the Thames to Watling Street, and included London. Kentish was spoken in the south-east, including part of Surrey. Dialectal differences are found in the oldest texts, and increase in significance during the period. The Anglian dialects had various distinctive characteristics in common, some of which were shared by Kentish, and it is probable that some differences already existed before the Angles and Saxons left the Continent. No literary records of East Anglian are extant, but divergences may be traced between North and South Northumbrian, and between literary West-Saxon and the Saxon patois of the *Blickling Homilies;* and the subsequent Middle English development shows that literary and spoken West-Saxon were not identical.

Old English Texts.—The bulk of the older poetic literature, *Beowulf*, *Widsith*, the so-called *Elegies* and *Lyrics*, the *Riddles*, and the works attributed to Cædmon and Cynewulf, though not of West-Saxon origin, has been preserved in late West-Saxon copies and a partly normalized dialect. The prose and later poetry are almost entirely West-Saxon, and information as to the other dialects is gleaned from texts of lesser literary importance.

Northumbrian: *Early* (8th century). Cædmon's Hymn, Bede's Death-Song. Inscription on Ruthwell Cross. *Late* (10th century). Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels. Durham Ritual (Interlinear versions in Latin MSS.).

Mercian: *Early.* Épinal Glosses (*c.* 700). Corpus Glosses (*c.* 750). Charters (from 8th century). Vespasian Psalter and Hymns (9th century). *Late* (10th century). St. Matthew in Rushworth Gospels.

West-Saxon: *Early.* Charters (from before 700). *9th century.* Works of Alfred and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* *Late* (10th and 11th centuries). Works of Ælfric.

Kentish: *Early.* Charters from 8th and 9th centuries. *Late.* Kentish Psalm and Hymn. Kentish Glosses.

Old English Alphabet and Character. — The Old Germanic *Runic character*, adapted from the Roman for cutting in wood, stone, or metal, was still used for inscriptions of this kind in England, as on the Bewcastle and Ruthwell Crosses and the Franks Casket. Runes were also occasionally used for abbreviations or acrostical devices in MSS., as in the *Rune Song*, or Cynewulf's signature of his name in four poems.

Cynewulf's signature.— ᚳ (Cēn) ᛉ (Yr) ᚾ (Nyd) ᛗ (Eþel) ᚹ (Wen) ᚢ (Ur) ᛚ (Lagu) ᚠ (Feoh).

The usual *Anglo-Saxon character* is the Irish form of the Roman script which was introduced in the northern monasteries, and replaced the earlier type in use at Canterbury.

Modifications of the Roman Alphabet.—The runic characters þ (thorn) and ƿ (wen) were used for *th* (as in *thick*) and *w*, and ð (properly *dd*) for *th* (as in *then*); *g* had a special Anglo-Saxon form ȝ; *q*, *z*, and *v* were represented respectively by *cw*, *s*, and *f*, and *k* by *c* (rarely *k*); *y* was used for the modified *u* (German *ü*), and the digraph æ for the vowel-sounds in that and être (Eng. there approximately). Vowel-length was sometimes indicated by doubling the vowel.

Pronunciation.—Old English spelling is mainly phonetic. The vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, had the present Continental values, and diphthongs were stressed on the first element (falling stress). Several consonants had more than one sound-value:

f, *s*, þ had (*a*) the sounds in *f*ace, *s*oon, *th*in in the initial and final position and next to *s* or *t*, (*b*) those in o*f*, a*s*, *th*e medially next to vowels; *g* and *c* had (*a*) the sounds in *g*o, *c*ome, (*b*) sounds approximating to those in *y*et, e*dg*e, *ch*in; *h* had (*a*) the sound in *h*ome, and (*b*) that in Scotch lo*ch* or German na*cht*.

Various important changes in pronunciation (the sound-changes of Umlaut, Breaking, Palatal diphthongization, etc.) took place in the Old English vowel-system in prehistoric times, and there were considerable modifications in historic times, of which the most important in its effect on the development of English was the gradual reducing of unstressed vowels in inflectional syllables and endings to the unstressed *-e*, thus giving rise to the levelled endings of Middle English.

General Characteristics of Old English. — (*a*) *Inflection.* Old English was still a fully inflected language, though many of the Old Germanic inflectional distinctions had already disappeared. *Nouns* were still differentiated according to their stem into two main groups, vocalic and consonantal stems, often called "strong" and "weak" (this ignores a few minor consonant groups) from their general correspondence with the German strong and weak declensions. The three original classes of masculine and neuter vocalic stems (*a*, *i*, and *u* declensions) and some minor consonantal groups were already tending to fall together under one type, which by the end of the period was declined as follows:

Nom. Acc. *stān*, G. *stānes*, D. *stāne*; Nom. Acc. Pl. *stānas* (*-es*), G. *stāna* (*-e*), D. *stānum* (*-en*), with difference only in the frequent retention of the old uninflected Nom. Acc. Pl. of the Neuter (*cf.* Modern English plurals sheep, deer, etc.).

Similar levelling took place in the feminine nouns. The weak declension was preserved in the south, but ceased to be differentiated from the strong in Northumbrian owing to the early loss of final *-n*. Four cases of nouns were preserved, but the accusative was rarely distinguished from the nominative. Traces of an old instrumental also occur, and prepositional constructions were already in use.

Adjectives had a twofold inflection, strong or weak, as in German, with distinction of gender, number, and case, but by the end of the period gender was no longer distinguished in the plural. The inflectional endings of the strong adjective corresponded partly with those of nouns, partly with those of the demonstrative pronoun.

Pronouns preserved a dual pronoun of the first and second persons. The pronoun of the third person (hē, hēo, hit), the definite article and demonstrative (sē, sēo, þæt), and the demonstrative (þēs, þēþs, þis) were fully inflected for three genders in the singular and one in the plural.

Verbs distinguished the indicative and subjunctive moods, and two tenses—the present, used also for the future, and preterite, which did duty for all past tenses; but the compound tenses were partly evolved by the end of the period. One distinct passive form (*hātte*, "I am *or* was called," also 3rd person) existed beside the usual periphrastic forms. There were seven classes of strong verbs, mostly with three or four distinct stem-forms, and three classes of weak verbs (preterites ner*ede*, luf*ode*, hæf*de*).

(*b*) The *syntax* was simple, somewhat resembling Modern German in the frequent placing of the subordinate verb at the end of the clause and in the use of inversion after an introductory clause, but the usage was elastic, and particularly so in poetry. Participial constructions and the use of short parallel sentences were common. In later Old English the structure of the sentence became more complex and elaborate, and syntactical rules such as that regulating the use of the two forms of the adjective became more fixed, while Latinisms such as the absolute use of the participle are found.

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III. MIDDLE ENGLISH

Chapter I. GENERAL VIEW

The Norman Conquest—Repression of the English—Gradual Unification of the Nation—England drawn into European Literature—Revival of National Literature

The Norman Conquest.—Six years after the battle of Hastings (1066), with the defeat of Hereward's last stand at Ely (1072), the whole of England came under the sway of the Conqueror, and any hope of reviving the Saxon kingdom was finally extinguished. But the Norman Conquest was not the expulsion of a people as the English Conquest had been; nor yet was it the enslavement of the English by an utterly foreign power. The Normans were of the same Nordic race as the Danes, and not more distant in blood and character from the English than Canute and his sons. William maintained that he was the lawful heir of Edward the Confessor, and he was certainly a kinsman, being the great-nephew of Edward's mother. He accepted the crown from the hands of the citizens of London, headed by Edgar Atheling, and proceeded, so far as such a thing was possible to his imperious temper and the feudal character of his authority, to govern with the consent of the governed. Norman influence had been powerful in England ever since the accession of Edward the Confessor, who had been educated in Normandy. Military conquest followed peaceful penetration as a natural sequel. Circumstances and Norman statesmanship made it easy for English and Normans to become one people. The process of amalgamation or absorption took a century and a half to complete, but it began with the work of William.

Temporary Repression of the English.—Meanwhile the English nation went into eclipse, politically and socially. William suppressed the six great earldoms, and made the shire the largest administrative unit. With the disappearance of most of the ancient freeholders great strides had been made before the Conquest towards a transformation of the old English polity into a feudal system. William completed this revolution, confiscating the estates of the intransigent nobles, and granting them to a new order of Norman barons, holding their lands as his vassals. But Norman feudalism in England differed from the feudalism of the Continent, and the barons were never allowed to grow into territorial sovereigns at the expense of the Crown. In 1086 Domesday Book registered the results of a great survey of the kingdom, and marked the full establishment of the new régime. Most of the descendants of the old nobility sank gradually into a middle class under the new aris-

tocracy. The higher offices of Church and State were filled exclusively by foreigners. But the sense of nationality was not lost. It was not the way of the Normans to suppress it. When Henry I. married Matilda, niece of Edgar Atheling, he set the seal on his restoration of the law of Edward the Confessor. When he invaded Normandy and defeated his brother Robert at Tinchebrai, he made England finally the native kingdom and Normandy the foreign possession.

English Psalter, 11th Century.

Unity of the Nation.—This state of things was not materially altered by the accession of the House of Anjou. Henry II. continued the policy of the first William and the first Henry, and under him Normans and English grew steadily into one people. The very extent of the king's Continental possessions, through the antagonism they created between the English and the French monarchs, fostered the spirit of nationality. The attempt of the French party among the barons to give the crown to Louis was easily foiled on the death of John, and provoked a deep hatred of foreigners and an aversion from adventures on the Continent. Henry III. retained Aquitaine and Gascony alone of the vast French fiefs of the Angevins. His long reign was disturbed by the renewed struggle of the baronage for the rights they had exacted from John in the Great Charter. The first Parliament was the outcome of their victory. The main events of the first Edward's reign were the conquest of Wales, the beginning of the long wars with France and Scotland, and the fiscal and legal reforms embodied in the Statutes of Westminster and the Statute of Winchester. The complete separation of the estates of the realm in Parliament

under Edward III., into Lords and Commons, marked the rise of an industrial middle class. The labouring classes were still subject to serfdom. They suffered grievously from the Black Death, and the discontent caused by attempts to regulate wages roused John Ball to preach and the author or authors of *Piers Plowman* to inveigh against the sins and follies of the time. This awakening of the lower orders to political consciousness coincided with an intellectual awakening, precursor of the birth of modern literature which will be the subject of the next section.

England and European Literature.—The net result of the Norman Conquest was to draw the English nation out of its insularity into the full current of European life. Its immediate literary effect was to repress the native elements. But in due course of time the English genius was to return into its own, and strengthened and enriched by its contact with more cosmopolitan literatures, was to show itself capable of universal range. Before the Conquest the English possessed a body of literary works far superior to any yet produced by the Normans or French. But the Conquest meant the ultimate supremacy of Romance forms and Classical ideals over Teutonic. The Normans, when they established themselves in France, had adopted the French language and the civilization and literary culture of France. These they brought with them to Britain, and for a century and a half the language of the English court and the baronial castle was French, and the language of the Church, the language of the learned, was Latin. The only literary use of English was in the more simple kinds of instruction for the uneducated. In the following century there came a great outburst of French poetry, and an immense stimulation of historical, philosophical, and humanistic work in Latin prose. The *trouvère* or *jongleur* was the favourite entertainer of the feudal household. The epical *chanson de geste* was succeeded by the lighter *roman d'aventure ;* and as chivalry and courtly love, products of the artificial social conditions imposed by feudalism, became more extravagant in their claims, the romances grew more fantastic, more frivolous, and more high-flown in their sentiment.

Revival of English.—When the vernacular revived, this romantic material was the nearest to hand. Layamon moulded the Arthurian legend, which had been popularized by Geoffrey of Monmouth, on the framework of the old alliterative lay. Wace turned it into a romance of chivalry. Many others, perhaps most, of the French romances were paraphrased or imitated by English gleemen, some in rhyme, some in alliterative metres. Throughout this chivalric literature a difference is apparent between the more polished and sophisticated poems meant for refined circles, and the ruder lays on the same subjects seasoned to the taste of the vulgar. With some exceptions the English versions are of this more rustic type.

The wave of patriotism that swept through England in the early phases of the Hundred Years' War, stirred the soul of the nation to the depths, and brought about another revival of the old alliterative poetry. Layamon had recaptured

something of the stern spirit of tribal heroism and religious devotion of the Old English poems. It is still visible in one of the most remarkable manifestations of the later revival, the Thornton *Morte Arthure*, in which a new rendering of the Arthurian story becomes a vehicle for the praise of Edward III. and the battle of Crécy and the sea-fight off Winchelsea. The contemporary *Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, finest of English mediæval poems, combines alliteration and modern rhyme, primitive myth and the spirit of French romance, with an art that heralds a renaissance. Chaucer and Langland were now at hand.

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Chapter 2. ANGLO-LATIN LITERATURE

The two International Literatures, French and Latin—Historians and Chroniclers: William of Malmesbury, Giraldus Cambrensis, Jocelyn de Brakelond—Humanism—The Universities—Franciscan Scholars: Walter Map, Richard de Bury

THE TWO INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES

Both Latin and French literature were international during the Middle Ages. Latin, as the official language of the Church and the accepted medium of scholarship, was cosmopolitan. French, we have seen, became the regular currency of social intercourse in England after the Conquest. The French romantic literature circulated afar over the Continent, and was carried even into Iceland. No one of any standing thought of writing in English now. The continuous effort that had been going on before the Conquest to turn Latin works of a religious or moral or of a merely instructive kind into the vernacular came to an end. The new ecclesiastical authorities, who were also the custodians of letters, cared little for popular education. But among their own class there was no lack of intellectual culture.

Clerical and Monkish Writers.—The immense wealth and power of the Church in Norman times are still attested by the massive architecture of the abbeys and cathedrals. Few examples remain of the modest Romanesque which succeeded the timber churches of the Saxons, before they began to copy their neighbours and future conquerors. The Normans founded great monastic establishments as well as mighty churches, and the Norman kings sought to retain control of the Church by keeping in their own hands the right of appointing bishops and abbots. The first two Norman archbishops of Canterbury, Lanfranc and Anselm, were learned Italians from the abbey of Bec, in Normandy. Both left writings, principally theological, those of Anselm important dialectical and controversial works; but they founded no school of theological or philosophical thought in England. The literary activity that was going on at this time in the cloister was turned in another direction, historiography. But the writers were not all churchmen. Several of the most eminent were laymen, or if not laymen were men of letters first and ecclesiastics in the second place, being rewarded, like Geoffrey of Monmouth or that versatile man of letters Walter Map, with clerical preferment for their services in literature or in public business.

Historians and Chroniclers.—The Anglo-Latin literature was at its most industrious and most able stage in the 12th and 13th centuries, when the Anglo-Norman people had become conscious of itself as a nation, and its position as a great power, due to the extent of Henry of Anjou's insular and Continental inheritance, fed

patriotic pride. This sought expression in the writing of history, both of the past and of the present. Some of the Latin writers were humble chroniclers and annalists, of the stamp of Florence of Worcester; but those who gave the period real distinction had a higher conception of history. On the one hand there was the monkish compiler, setting down facts without sifting the important from the insignificant, and accepting fable and legend without scrutiny; and on the other the critical historian, with a sense of historical perspective, or the experienced man of affairs, having an instinctive perception of the relative importance of events and a gift for portraying the life and movement of the time in which he had borne an active part. There is no need to dwell on the former class; the work of some of the more enlightened writers may be briefly described.

Northern and Southern Historians.—In Northern England several monastic annalists followed patiently in the footsteps of Bede. Simeon of Durham ranks a little higher than Florence of Worcester, as a conscientious recorder of mainly local matters. Richard of Hexham and his son John set down the facts that came within their knowledge in the times of Stephen and after. Then, towards the end of the 12th century, two writers of a more scholarly and critical character, Roger of Hoveden and William of Newburgh, undertook histories of a more comprehensive kind which are of some importance in regard to contemporary events.

In the south, contemporary with Simeon of Durham and Florence of Worcester, two writers, Eadmer and the Anglo-Norman Ordericus Vitalis, showed more literary ability and may claim some authority on ecclesiastical history. With them may be placed Henry of Huntingdon, the author of a *Historia Anglorum* somewhat better than the average work of the compilers. But the first name of real distinction we come to is that of William, the librarian and precentor of the Benedictine abbey at Malmesbury.

William of Malmesbury (*c.* 1142) was master of a vivid and graceful style, and took pains to make his narrative interesting by dint of lively anecdote and pictorial description. But his particular merit was to abandon the laborious plodding after events in strict chronological order, and to tell his story, with many a pleasing digression, so as to bring out the meaning and nexus of incidents as he conceived them. He wrote a *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* (A.D. 449–1127), with a sequel, *Historiæ Novellæ*, coming down to 1142, some lives of English bishops and of St. Wulfstan, and a history of Glastonbury.

Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales (*c.* 1147–*c.* 1223), was a Welshman, like his contemporary Geoffrey of Monmouth, who will be treated more fittingly among the romancers. Gerald also was a romanticist in disposition and style, but he plumed himself on his scholarship and the strict reliability of his topographical and biographical works. Always in the forefront of affairs, he found an apt and truly historical subject in his own career, though he died a disappointed man, his zeal for Welsh independence and for Church reform proving as barren

of results as his long-cherished ambition to obtain the see of St. Davids. Fine classical scholar though he was, Gerald threw pedantry to the winds, and made his style as light and daring and picturesque as his own brilliant conversation. He wrote two works on Ireland, a *Topography* and a *History of the Conquest*, both the results of first-hand experience and keen observation. For his native country he wrote an *Itinerary* and a *Description of Wales*, full of curious learning and entertainment, but inferior in either respect to his favourite work, the *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, a vigorous indictment of the ignorance of the Welsh clergy. Gerald was a character, and it is his strong individuality that gives character to his books; but they have also an historical value of their own.

Other Historians.—The humble, realistic *Chronica* of Jocelyn de Brakelond (1173–1203) has been immortalized by Carlyle in *Past and Present*. It is an incomparable picture of the daily life of the cloister. Ralph de Diceto, with the self-confidence of his kind, started his *Imagines* or outlines of histories at the Creation; yet he is of some importance on the period 1148–1202. But the most authoritative contemporary account of the reign of Henry II. is that ascribed to a certain Benedict of Peterborough. Whoever the author may have been, he was familiar with matters of state, and made good use of public documents. Roger of Wendover was another of the chroniclers who began with the Creation; his *Flores Historiarum* is not worthless, however, in its later pages. It was continued by MATTHEW PARIS (*c.* 1200–1259), who succeeded Roger as historiographer of St. Albans (1236). Paris, in the famous *Chronica Majora*, revised and carried on the work of Roger to 1259, producing the most orderly, well-informed, and amply documented of all the histories dating from that era. This monk of St. Albans was acquainted with Continental affairs as well as English. He had been on a mission for the Pope to Norway. He was intimate with Henry III., and lived in close touch with the court. No one could be better equipped by practical experience and personal capacity for writing the history of his own time; and he produced an orderly, critical, and absorbing chronicle of the affairs of England and Europe, which later historiographers, such as Rishanger and Thomas of Walsingham, were proud to continue. A minor historian of the next century, Ranulph Higden, author of the *Polychronicon*, a popular compendium of universal history, acquired fame beyond his actual merits through the fact that John of Trevisa's English translation, the first real historical work in the vernacular since the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, always commanded an enormous number of readers, and was among the books printed by Caxton.

Humanism and Belles-Lettres.—In the time of Charlemagne, England was a source of learning to the Continent, and sent forth Alcuin to inspire and reorganize Continental schools. At the time we are now dealing with the position was reversed, and Paris had become the great centre of European scholarship. Hither flocked multitudes of students from many countries to hear the brilliant lectures of Abelard (*d.* 1142); and early in the 13th century the University of Paris came into

existence, organized into four Nations, among which the English and other Northerners counted not the least. The most prominent English apostle of culture was John of Salisbury, who had been one of Abelard's pupils, and in late middle age returned to Paris as a teacher, dying Bishop of Chartres (1180). This great classical scholar was an active man of affairs. As secretary to Archbishop Theobald he officiated on various important missions; and later, as right-hand man to Theobald's successor, Becket, with whom he was at the time of the murder, he came into conflict with Henry II., and found it advisable to leave the country. His chief works were the Latin treatises *Polycraticus* and *Metalogicus*, and a large collection of letters, of high literary and historical value.

Foundation of the Universities.—The University of Oxford probably had its origin in a considerable migration of English students from Paris, owing to an order of Henry II., who suspected them of being partisans of Becket. Oxford was recognized about 1167 as a *studium generale*, or centre for the resort of students, and the colleges were founded as places of residence on the model of the Paris Nations—Merton in 1264 and Balliol in 1282. Cambridge University came into existence as the result of a migration from Oxford (1209). The teaching was organized on the lines of the trivium and quadrivium—grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. There were also lectures on divinity, law, and medicine, and schools of philosophy, which were the battle-ground of the "Realists" and "Nominalists." In the growth of the universities we see the development of secular learning; scholarship ceases to be a monopoly of the Church and the monastery.

Franciscan Scholars.—Soon after their arrival in England, the Franciscan friars established themselves at Oxford and Cambridge, and opened schools, the first rector of the Oxford seminary being ROBERT GROSSETESTE (1224), who had been educated there and probably at Paris. He was subsequently made Bishop of Lincoln (1235). Grosseteste was a giant of learning and a miscellaneous and fertile author. His friend and fellow-Franciscan Adam Marsh rivalled him in learning and ability as a teacher, but his only extant monument is his letters, which reveal an estimable character but have not the literary style of Grosseteste. ROGER BACON (*c.* 1214–94) was the most illustrious of the Oxford Franciscans. Bacon was a man of universal learning, in an age when this was still possible. The "father of experimental science" was conversant with Hebrew and Arabic, as well as the classical tongues, and wrote on all the subjects of contemporary study. A fearless critic of the speculative philosophy of the Schoolmen, he met with harsh treatment from the superiors of his order for the freedom of his thought and the boldness of his scientific researches, which caused him to incur with the ignorant the odium of a magician. Like the poet Virgil, Merlin the enchanter, Faust and Paracelsus, he appears in mediæval and Renaissance legend as a supernatural or semi-supernatural

figure. His *Opus Majus* and *Opus Minus* are a comprehensive treatise and a summary of this new learning; to these he provided an introduction in the *Opus Tertium*.

The "Realist" Duns Scotus and the "Nominalist" William of Ockham were also Franciscans and alumni of Oxford. Alexander of Hales was called the "Irrefragable Doctor," Marsh the "Illustrious," Roger Bacon the "Marvellous," Duns Scotus the "Subtle," and William of Ockham the "Invincible." Among the learned of a more specialist character must be mentioned the writer on law, Richard FitzNeal, author of a work on the Exchequer, *Dialogus de Scaccario* (1178–9); the great justiciar and jurist Ranulph de Glanville (*d.* 1190), reputed author of the treatise *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Regni Angliæ;* and the ecclesiastic Henry de Bracton, who held high judicial office under Henry II., and devoted the leisure hours of a busy life to the more comprehensive and laboriously annotated treatise that goes under the same title.

WALTER MAP (*c.* 1137–*c.* 1209).—Doubt and conjecture surround the name of Walter Map, a native of the Welsh marches and a friend of Gerald of Wales. He is credited with a record of literary work more varied than that ascribed to the later Huchown of the Awle Ryale, and perhaps his claims are still more flimsy. He was one of the scholars who had studied at Paris, and held a position in the household of Henry II., serving as one of the king's itinerant judges before he received ecclesiastical preferment, finally that of Archdeacon of Oxford (1197). Map appears in the guise of an earlier Erasmus in his witty miscellany of anecdote and commentary, *De Nugis Curialium* (*c.* 1180–93), which satirizes the monks as well as the courtiers. He wrote a popular treatise against marriage, and was the alleged progenitor of the ribald (Goliardic) verses which delighted profane students in England and abroad down to the Renaissance and beyond. There is more inherent improbability in the legend that Map was the author of the romance of *Lancelot*. Yet so strange is the story of the growth of the Arthurian cycle, that it would not be surprising if proof came to light some day that the witty courtier did, perhaps out of some real drama in his own surroundings, concoct a history, romantic or sardonic, which was the germ of this great addition to the Arthuriad. Whether all he is credited with by report be genuine or largely mythical, Map remains the most representative among the Latinists of what later times called "belles-lettres." There were, of course, many others. Among satirists, there were Nigel Wireker, author of the *Speculum Stultorum*, and Jean de Hauteville, author of the *Architrenius;* among fabulists, Alexander Neckham; and among epigrammatists, Godfrey of Cambrai, prior of St. Swithin's, Winchester, who left *Proverbia* in the style of Martial. Hilarius, author of three sacred plays, also wrote graceful Latin lyrics; and the composers of elegiacs, epitaphs, and miscellaneous trifles were numerous.

This section may fitly end with the honoured name of Richard of Bury, or Richard Aungerville (1287–1345), author of the *Philobiblon*, diplomat, statesman, Bishop of Durham, but above all bibliophile. His is one of the few Latin books from this epoch that are still read for pleasure and inspiration. His precious library was

dispersed after his death, and even the catalogue is lost. But book-lovers will never forget the grand master of their order.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Bracton, Ralph of Diceto, Simeon of Durham, FitzNeal, Fitzstephen, Giraldus Cambrensis, Henry of Huntingdon, Roger of Hoveden, Jocelyn de Brakelond, William of Malmesbury, Matthew Paris, Roger of Wendover, and numerous other chroniclers appear in the Rolls Series, and a number are translated in Bohn's Series. See also MAP, W.: *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. T. Wright (Camden Society, 1850); RICHARD OF BURY: *Philobiblon*, ed. E. C. Thomas (Moring, 1903); and, for bibliography, GROSS, C.: *Sources and Literature of English History* (Longmans, 2nd ed., 1915).

Chapter 3. ANGLO-NORMAN AND ANGLO-FRENCH LITERATURE

The Cycles of Romance—*Chansons de geste* and *romans d'aventure*—The matter of France, of Britain, and of Rome

THE CYCLES OF ROMANCE

During the period when French was the language of the court and the Norman aristocracy, not only was French literature read in this country, but a good deal was written. The Anglo-Norman authors included Hugh of Rutland, author of the romance *Ypomedon* (*c.* 1185), the unknown authors of *Amadas et Ydoine*, and, no doubt, of the romances with English subjects, *Havelok*, *Horn et Rimenhild*, *Guy de Warwick*, *Boeve de Hamtone*, and *Waldef*. Thomas, author of the fine *Tristan* poem of which only fragments are extant, was an Anglo-Norman. That exquisite poet, Marie de France, was a Frenchwoman writing at the English court. These were all writers of lays or romances. But on the borderland of romance and history, and in regular historiography, there were a number of Anglo-Normans writing in French. Geoffrey Gaimar based his rhymed chronicle, the *Estorie des Bretons*, on the version of British history recently put forth by Geoffrey of Monmouth; and Geoffrey Wace followed suit in his *Brut*, which seems to have been a better poem, and consequently to have brought about the eclipse and disappearance of Gaimar's work. We still possess, however, Gaimar's *Estorie des Engles*, which contains a great deal of legendary and saga material. Wace also wrote a chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, called the *Roman de Rou;* and his successor in the office of Norman historiographer, Benoît, continued the task in his enormous *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie*. These and several semi-historical or biographical poems that might be named are of scant literary interest, and to chronicle the fables, *contes*, and *dits*, the political songs, satires, parodies, and the like, written by courtiers, knights, or clerks, would make a lengthy catalogue. The most poetical work outside the romances is Bishop Grosseteste's beautiful allegory, the *Château d'Amour*, a pleasing example of the allegorical poetry typified by the more famous *Roman de la Rose*. The Castle of Love is the body of the Virgin Mary. In its highest tower God is enthroned, and the four turrets are symbols of the four cardinal virtues. The poem was translated into Latin, and subsequently into English.

When English reasserted its rights as a literary language English examples appeared of all these diverse genres. But the most distinctive body of literature in the Middle Ages, both in French and in English, not to mention imitations in other languages, was that broadly designated as romance. Romance developed out of the French *chanson de geste*, an epical narrative of the deeds of a popular hero,

particularly one of the knights and nobles historically or traditionally associated with Charlemagne and his wars. An enormous number of these were produced from the 11th to the 13th century; and, beginning a little later but appearing side by side with the *chansons*, came the *romans d'aventure*, narrative poems usually composed in rhyme instead of the *laisses* or tirades of verse bound together by simple assonance, and more varied in interest, less severe, in short more romantic than the *chansons*, both in tone and treatment.

The Matter of France, of Britain, and of Rome.—The romances, including in the term both the types here distinguished, may be roughly divided by their subjects into three groups—the French, the British or Arthurian, and the Classical and Oriental. The conventional division, set forth by the *trouvère* Jean Bodel, is not very accurate, but with a little correction may be made to serve. In English, when, after the Anglo-Norman poetry, it became possible again to use the vernacular, even in poems or prose works meant for cultivated society—that is to say, from the latter half of the 12th to the end of the 14th century, almost all the poems of any length were translations, paraphrases, or adaptations of French romances belonging to these three groups. It will be convenient to consider these metrical romances more closely under the three well-known heads, the Matter of Britain, which is in the main the Arthurian stories and their connections, coming first; then the Matter of France—that is, the stories of Charlemagne and his peers; and lastly, the Matter of "Rome la grant," which covered all the romances of classical antiquity, those of Troy and Alexander as well as those of Rome. Neither the romancers nor their audiences were troubled by fine distinctions. Even fact and fiction were much the same thing to most of them, and the past was simply the past, not a matter of dates. Thus when the East came into view at the epoch of the Crusades, tales of Byzantium and Egypt were mixed up pell-mell with stories of the ancient Greeks, mostly unhistorical, and the wildest Oriental romance found its way in as the natural embellishment even of tales having a classical basis. There are a number of romances that do not fall under the accepted heads even in the loosest interpretation, such for example as the stories of native English origin which appeared first in Anglo-French poems, and which are quite distinct from what is commonly meant by the Matter of Britain. These miscellaneous items may be left to the last.

Chapter 4. THE MATTER OF BRITAIN: ARTHURIAN ROMANCE

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the British Kings*; his Sources—Adaptations and Amplifications of Geoffrey—Wace, Layamon, etc.—French Metrical Romances, Breton Lays, Welsh Poems and Legends—English Renderings and Adaptations—Prose Redactions

Main Groups of Romance.—As already pointed out, the romances that formed the most popular body of literature in the age of chivalry fall into three main groups, representing the Matter of France, the Matter of Britain, and the Matter of Rome. The first stands for Charlemagne and his paladins, the second for King Arthur and the legends of the Round Table, and the third for the Homeric doings, the wars of Alexander, and miscellaneous subjects from classical literature, history, and legend. They will be taken here in a different but more convenient order.

ORIGINS OF THE ARTHURIAN LEGEND

Geoffrey of Monmouth.—The book that gave the first great impetus to the growth of Arthurian literature, particularly in England, was the *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, or *History of the Kings of Britain*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Little is known of its author. He was born about 1100, probably at Monmouth, and of Welsh blood. His uncle and foster-father was Archdeacon of Llandaff, an office given to Geoffrey on his uncle's advancement to the bishopric. He dedicated his book to the powerful Earl Robert of Gloucester, by whose favour probably it was that he eventually became Bishop of St. Asaph as an acknowledgment of his literary eminence.

His Works.—He wrote the *Prophecies of Merlin*, afterwards incorporated as a seventh book in the *Historia*. The *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, composed in ornate Latin prose, was given to the world at some date between 1135 and 1138; its popularity was rapid and widespread. Whether the poem in Latin hexameters, *Vita Merlini*, the life of Merlin (1148), was by Geoffrey is doubtful.

The "Historia."—Geoffrey put forth his book as a serious history of the kings of Britain, from Brutus the Trojan, supposed eponymous founder of the race, to Cadwallader, Arthur's eighth successor, under whom the Britons were finally expelled from their land by the Saxons. He begins with an account of the wanderings of Brutus and establishment of a colony of Trojans in Britain, and of his successors as rulers of the land down to the Roman invasion. This part of the chronicle contains many legends that afterwards furnished material for great literature, such as the story of Sabrina, of Bladud, of King Leir, and of Ferrex and Porrex. Cæsar's

invasion and wars with Cassibelaunus, with the historical or mythical events of the Roman period, bring the story down to the obscure times when the Britons were left alone to resist the attacks first of the Picts and then of the Saxons. This is the fullest and most important part of the book, the reign of Arthur taking up about a fifth of the whole, although Geoffrey traces the history of Britain altogether through a millennium and a half.

Narrative.—*After telling of the coming of Hengist and Horsa to Kent, and the weak conduct of the British ruler Vortigern, who married the daughter of Hengist and betrayed his countrymen to the Saxons, he gives an amplified account of the birth of a supernatural boy, whom he identifies with the great enchanter Merlin, devoting the seventh book to Merlin's prophecies about the future of Britain. Aurelius and Uther, sons of Constantinus and brothers of Constans, two Roman kings of Britain mentioned by Bede, now slay Vortigern, and carry on successful war against the Saxons and other foes, Uther becoming King of Britain on the death of Aurelius. Uther loves Igerna, wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, and through Merlin's arts becomes by her father of Arthur. He defeats Gorlois, marries Igerna, and after continued wars against the Saxons is poisoned by them.*

Arthur at the age of fifteen becomes king, and in a series of battles ending with the great conflict of Mount Badon (often identified with Bath), in which he performs prodigious deeds of prowess, completely subdues the Saxons, and then defeats the Picts and Scots at the river Duglas. Scotland is restored to its rightful kings, Ireland and Iceland conquered, Gothland and the Orkneys reduced to pay tribute, and Norway and Dacia (Denmark) subdued. Arthur next invades Gaul, which he reduces to submission after nine years of war, bestowing Normandy on Bedivere, Anjou on Kai, and dividing the rest among his knights. Lucius of Rome having threatened vengeance, Arthur prepares a great host to meet him. After several desperate conflicts, he overthrows and kills Lucius in a tremendous battle, in which Bedivere and Kai with other knights are slain. Arthur is on the point of invading Italy when he learns that his nephew Modred, whom he had left in charge of the kingdom, has married his queen, Guenevere, and usurped the throne. He returns forthwith, defeats Modred and his host of Picts and Scots, Saxons and Irish, pursues him into Cornwall, and in a last great battle, in which Modred and most of the leading knights on either side perish, is himself wounded to death, and is carried to the Isle of Avalon to be healed of his wounds.

Arthur is succeeded by his kinsman Constantine, under whom and his successors the Britons have many vicissitudes of fortune, their supremacy in Britain ending with the reign of Cadwallader, who flees to Armorica and dies a monk.

Geoffrey's Sources.—Geoffrey asserts that he derived his material for the history

of Britain from an ancient book in the British tongue given him by Archdeacon Gualter of Oxford, who brought it over from Brittany. It is most improbable that any such book ever existed. What seems to have happened was that he took the older narratives attributed to the British writers Gildas and Nennius, filled them out with new detail, and with the aid of legends gathered from many sources and of his own fertile imagination, worked this material up into a romantic account of the splendid career of Arthur.

Gildas.—Of the three previous historians on whom Geoffrey's work was based, we may pass over Bede, since his short account of the period is obviously founded on Gildas and the writers used by Nennius. Of Gildas we know little beyond what he himself discloses in his lament for the calamities of Britain and denunciation of the princes and people for their sins, entitled *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniæ* (*c.* 547). At this time, some fifty years after the year of Mount Badon, when he was born, there appears to have been a Romanizing faction opposed to the national party among the Britons; and, to judge from his singling out for eulogy a leader with a Roman name, Gildas was a warm partisan of the former. He gives a meagre account of the arrival of the Saxons, called in to help repel the Picts and Scots, and of the battles fought against the Saxons when they abused their opportunities by pillaging the land. He states that the Britons rallied and were victorious under Ambrosius Aurelianus; he does not mention Arthur or any other native leader.

Nennius.—Nennius, who about 800 compiled his *Historia Britonum* from some documents of the 7th and 8th centuries, has a more circumstantial account of the coming of Hengist and Horsa, the flagitious deeds of Vortigern, and the varying fortunes of the British struggle against the invaders, describing Arthur as the British commander (*dux bellorum*, "leader in the battles"). He inserts, among other episodes, the tale of the marvellous boy, here called Ambrosius, whom Geoffrey afterwards identified with Merlin, and in a number of incidents provides a basis for the more dramatic scenes of Geoffrey's story. Geoffrey, in truth, exceeds Nennius in picturesque vigour as much as Nennius exceeds the bare outlines vouchsafed by Gildas.

King Arthur.—British and Continental literature has given us many different portrayals of Arthur and the Arthurian age, all of which are more or less fabulous. History tells us almost nothing, and the indefatigable researches of scholars among poems, legends, and folk-lore have yielded little of unquestioned certainty. Probably the illustrious leader mentioned by Nennius was gradually credited in popular esteem with the exploits and attributes of other warriors. In times when there was but a vague borderland between fact and myth, he may have gathered round his head marvels from older Welsh stories pertaining to other heroes, and even to semi-divine personages. At all events, in Breton and other stories nearer to an

uncontaminated Celtic fount, Arthur figures rather as a king of fairyland than in the guise of a powerful British monarch such as pleased the mind of the half-Norman Geoffrey. And the process of accretion by which independent stories became attached to the central tale of Arthur and the Round Table can be watched in the innumerable poems and romances that now began to be produced all over Europe. Every one of these writers gives internal evidence of the wide currency of popular tales of Arthur and his knights, not only in Wales, but in England, and most of all in Brittany, the ancient Armorica, whither many of the Celtic inhabitants of Britain had migrated after the departure of the Romans.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGEND IN ENGLAND

Wace's "Brut d'Angleterre."—Shortly after the appearance of Geoffrey's history, it was translated into a French metrical chronicle by the Anglo-Norman Geoffrey Gaimar, whose similar *Estorie des Engles* is still extant, the other work, the history of the Britons, being lost. In 1155, a Norman poet, Wace, a native of Jersey, published a liberal paraphrase of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, in Norman-French couplets. Wace was a poet of no small ability, with more experience of actual life and affairs than Geoffrey possessed, and he handled the story with skill and imagination. He speaks of the Round Table, a subject not mentioned by Geoffrey, and alludes later to the forest of Broceliande and its marvels. He did not add much of any consequence, however, to his original, beyond the more vivid colour and vivacity befitting a poetic narrative. But he did give a new tone to the story. Geoffrey's chronicle was imaginative history; Wace's poem is, distinctively, a romance of chivalry, in which Arthur appears as a regal knight-errant, environed by barons and chevaliers, warring against hordes of pagans. It is the spirit of the epics of Charlemagne and the *Chanson de Roland.*

Layamon's "Brut."—The next great expansion of the story left by Geoffrey was an English national poem in alliterative verse composed by Layamon early in the 13th century. His poem was in the main an expansion of Wace's metrical history, which he doubled in length; but he may have derived something from the lost chronicle of Gaimar, and probably used a version of Wace differing considerably from the one now printed. But the characteristic tone of the poem is entirely different from that of Celtic romance, and the supernaturalism is more nearly akin to the Teutonic elves and norns than to Celtic magic. He surpasses Wace in realism and fire much more than Wace surpasses Geoffrey. Using his materials with perfect freedom, he transforms the story into a national epic, in which Arthur is not a mere hero of chivalry, but a powerful and kingly monarch, a mighty warrior surrounded by able chiefs and vassal kings.

Later Chroniclers.—Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote ostensibly as an historian. In

the Middle Ages there were writers of history who sifted their evidence and were critical about sources; but the majority were not merely lax but credulous, and the tale of Arthur was accepted with all its embellishments down to the time of Holinshed. The only chroniclers that need detain us, and that merely because they at least affected a literary form, are the metrical chroniclers Robert of Gloucester and Peter Langtoft, writing about the end of the 13th century, and Robert Mannyng of Brunne, who wrote a little later. Robert of Gloucester paraphrased Geoffrey and some other authorities in rhyming couplets and a doggerel style, and Langtoft wrote a similar work in French. Mannyng, better known as the author of *Handlyng Synne*, composed, or rather compiled, a chronicle partly from Langtoft and partly from Wace. These writers were not slavish copyists; they tried to take a personal view of the story they borrowed, and retold it in their own ways; but they were of inferior literary importance to the others mentioned in this chapter.

FRENCH ARTHURIAN POEMS

Foreign Influences.—In the Middle Ages, when nothing like our modern notions of originality and the heinousness of plagiarism had ever occurred to a human mind, there was a natural tendency for any attractive subject, like the feats of Charlemagne's paladins and the marvels of Eastern and Western magic, to be regarded as international property. Within half a century after Geoffrey's *Historia*, Arthur had become a cosmopolitan hero, famous from Italy to Iceland, and the theme of more lays and romances on the Continent than in the island of his origin. This development cannot be traced without close consideration of a mass of French works, which were largely responsible for most of the Arthurian literature produced in England from the time of Layamon to that of Tennyson and Swinburne, and even reacted upon the native literature of Wales.

The Breton Lays.—The transformation of the romantic history with its accretions of legend into a complex cycle of romances may be traced in the intermediate stages of the short poems called the Breton lays, the *Tristan* poems of the two Normans, Béroul and Thomas, and the metrical romances of Chrétien de Troyes. The lays were brief poems dealing with incidents from Celtic folk-lore and kindred sources that originated among the Bretons of Armorica. Some were about Arthur; many about knights and lovers and fairies that were eventually enrolled in Arthur's countless retinue; others, like the charming one turned into English as *Sir Orfeo*, came from classical lore. This was the old tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, transmuted into a fairy story of a visit to the Celtic Otherworld. Whatever the origin, every tale was invested with this atmosphere of fairyland. Thus one of the finest examples existing in English, Thomas Chestre's *Sir Launfal*, tells of a knight blessed with the love of a fairy, who lays on him one condition, that he shall not boast of his high fortune. In a moment of inadvertence he breaks his promise. The fay

withdraws her love, and he is suddenly hurled into the direst distress and peril; till, when he has been condemned to death by a jealous queen, his supernatural mistress relents and carries him off to the blissful Isle of Avalon. *Lanval*, the original of this, and *Le Freine*, also existing in an English version, were by Marie de France, a Norman lady living at the English court, about 1175. Five early manuscripts are extant, attesting the popularity of her lays. They are miniature romances, gems of accomplished workmanship, compact and well-turned as the contemporary *fabliaux*, but very different in their grace and tenderness. *Le Chèvrefeuille*, or *The Honeysuckle*, relates an incident of the loves of Tristram and Iseult, and, like several others of the Breton lays, has, so to speak, a posthumous connection with the Arthurian cycle. No doubt other lays, which have disappeared, formed a transitional stage between the finished compositions of Chrétien and the popular tales from which much of their substance must have been ultimately derived.

Tristram and Iseult.—Before the date of Marie's lays, the tragic love-story of Tristram and Iseult had been treated by the Norman poet Béroul, about 1150, and twenty years later by the Anglo-Norman Thomas. Till recently the Tristram legend, which was not attached to the Arthurian cycle till a late date, was regarded as one of the most ancient of Celtic myths. Gaston Paris described it as derived from some ancestral myth among the Picts or Celts,[1] which became saturated with Classical and Oriental influences when it was revived by the Bretons of Armorica and adopted by the Saxons and gallicized Normans. Recent inquiry, however, gives good reasons for finding all the germs of the story in historical times and facts that can be definitely localized. Iseult was probably the daughter of a Scandinavian chief ruling in Dublin at the middle of the 9th century,[2] a person of whom various independent records exist. The story told in so many different versions from Béroul to Wagner in all probability had a solid foundation in actual incidents, also independently recorded; and, if the views of leading antiquaries may be trusted, the ruins of a chapel founded by Iseult herself may still be seen in the environs of Dublin.[3] Gorm, or Horm, the supposed father of Iseult, has further been identified with Horn, the hero of the old romance of *Horn and Rimenhild*. This later view of the origin of the world-famous story is of more than antiquarian importance. Obviously, if in this case and in that of the Perceval legend, to be referred to later, it can be shown that traditional versions of historical incidents came to be embedded in the composite mass of Arthurian story, a new light is thrown on the obscure process by which the legend of Arthur, so small in its beginnings, grew with strange rapidity to such vast proportions.

Béroul.—Béroul's rendering of the famous story is a variant of the ordinary

[1] G. Paris, *Poëmes et Légendes du Moyen-âge—Tristan et Iseut.*
[2] *Athenæum*, Feb. 1, 1913, and subsequent correspondence.
[3] *Athenæum*, May 30, 1914, and subsequent correspondence.

version, inasmuch as he makes the magic philtre enchaining Tristram and Iseult in their fatal passion decline in potency after a season. When Iseult has returned to her husband, a more human love for her lost paramour takes the place of the old madness, and gives a pathetic interest to the second part of the story, which unfortunately breaks off before the end. Thomas's story is not so simple in style, and dwells in the manner of a sentimental novelist on the emotions of the loveless spouses and parted lovers. He was preparing the way for Chrétien's analysis of the fine shades of courtly love.

Chrétien de Troyes (*c.* 1140–*c.* 1191).—The Provençal poet Chrétien also wrote a *Tristan*, which is lost. His extant poems are the first to show the Arthurian stories marshalled into a cycle. Furthermore, they became the ultimate originals of many English poems and romances both in mediæval and in modern times. *Erec et Énide* told the story of Geraint, found later in the Welsh *Mabinogion* and in Tennyson's *Geraint and Enid*. *Cligès* is an analytical tale of passion only slenderly associated with Arthur. *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* gave the world the enthralling love-story of Lancelot and Guenevere, unknown to Geoffrey and his direct followers, who made the villainous Modred lover of the queen. A masterly poem, *Yvain*, or *Le Chevalier au Lion*, tells the Celtic tale of the magic fountain guarded by an armed champion, and of the widowed lady who, after brief wooing, marries the slayer of her husband, the aforesaid champion. This is the same story as the *Lady of the Fountain* in the *Mabinogion*. *Perceval le Gallois*, of which Chrétien wrote 10,000 lines and three continuators no less than 60,000 more, is the first great literary presentment of the Grail quest. The corresponding tale included in Lady Charlotte Guest's version of the *Mabinogion* is *Peredur*.

The New Romances.—If the reader will imagine one of Tennyson's *Idylls*, such as *Geraint and Enid*, amplified on the lines of a novel, and infused with a totally different ethical feeling, a worldly, sceptical, and playful spirit, dallying with love in a way like that of the sentimental romances of Mlle de Scudéry, he will have a good idea of a typical poem of Chrétien's. It had plot, character-drawing, clever portraiture of manners, customs, costumes, and the elegance and pageantry of court life; above all, it had love interest. It was the artificial sentiment approved by the Courts of Love, the knight's allegiance to the chosen lady, erected into a religion, with an accepted ritual, and a code of rules deduced from Ovid's *Art of Love*. Chrétien wrote at the court of Marie de Champagne, daughter of Louis VII. of France, and of Eleanor, afterwards wife of our Henry II., famous as the mother and abettor of rebellious princes. Recently it has been suggested that Eleanor was the original of Guenevere, and her devoted seneschal, William, Earl of Pembroke, of the guilty Lancelot; also that Perceval, earliest hero of the Grail quest, was their natural son, a nameless knight killed in Ireland in 1204.[1] Chrétien states, significantly,

[1] *Athenæum*, Aug. 29, Sept. 19, 1915, and March 6, 1916.

that the substance of the Lancelot story was given him by his liege lady, Marie de Champagne.

Welsh Tales of Arthur.—It is unnecessary here to go into the vexed questions of the real or imaginary allusions to Arthur in ancient Welsh poems and legends. We now possess in Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion* a beautiful English translation of four tales, called the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, found in a 15th-century MS., the *Red Book of Hergest*. These stories, dating from a much earlier epoch, contain nothing about Arthur; but with them are associated five later stories of the king or his knights, the three already mentioned, *Geraint*, the *Lady of the Fountain*, and *Peredur*, dealing with the themes of three of Chrétien's romances, and two of purely British origin, devoid of the foreign features introduced into these three. Of the two British tales, *Kilhwch and Olwen* comprises an enormous list of Arthurian names, with incidents that have recognizable connections with history. All are thoroughly Welsh in details, ideas, and atmosphere, even the three apparently reimported from Chrétien, the history of which, enshrining as they do primitive Welsh myths and Welsh names afterwards gallicized, is an obscure problem.

The Holy Grail.—The two motives that ultimately transformed Arthurian story into an Arthuriad, giving the miscellaneous congeries of tales a unity more integral than that of mere grouping round a central personage, were the inspiring idea of the Grail quest and the tragic loves of Guenevere and Lancelot. As we have seen, Chrétien introduced this latter element, perhaps borrowing the story from a lost French romance (possibly by Walter Map) that is said to have been the original of the German Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's poem. We have also seen that Chrétien wrote 10,000 lines of a Grail poem, in which the knight of the quest is Perceval, not the saintly Galahad of later romances. But in origin the Grail motive belongs to a remote antiquity. At first, the Grail appears as a heathen talisman, the ultimate provenance and esoteric meaning of which are subjects still of keenest controversy. In the process of time it became identified with the sacred vessel that received the blood of Christ after the Crucifixion, and the quest, which in the Welsh *Peredur* is simply a story of vengeance, was definitely christianized. The 13th-century metrical romance *Sir Percyvelle* gives a form of the Perceval story older even than that of *Peredur*; here it has not yet been combined with the ancient tradition of the Grail.

ANGLO-NORMAN AND ENGLISH ARTHURIAN ROMANCES

Borron's Trilogy.—The profoundly mystical character which the story later assumed was due, presumably, to the Anglo-Norman knight, Robert de Borron, who (*c.* 1170–1212) composed a trilogy of poems in which the story of Arthur, the Round Table, and the Grail becomes an epic of the conversion of Britain. The first and second parts alone have survived, and in a mutilated condition. They were soon

cast into prose, rearranged, and enormously extended. They went on expanding in the hands of later scribes, until they reached the unwieldy dimensions in which they were printed in the 15th and 16th centuries. Probably the missing third part is represented by the French romance known as the "Didot" *Perceval*, after the owner of the MS. The rude English alliterative romance called *Joseph of Arimathea* is derived from the *Grand Saint Graal*, one of the later prose recensions of Borron. Here Galahad is the victorious hero of the quest. Borron's *Merlin* was worked up and expanded to form an introduction to the huge romance of Lancelot, compiled about 1220.

Prose Romances.—The only English prose romances of Arthur were the *Merlin*, translated from this expansion of Borron's poem, and Malory's great recension of many Arthurian romances, the *Morte Darthur*. The French prose *Lancelot* has, however, been claimed for an English writer, Walter Map (see *ante*, p. 616), author of *De Nugis Curialium*, a miscellany of satirical anecdotes and legends. The finest part of this romance is the second portion, *La Queste del Saint Graal*, which tells in noble French prose of Lancelot's failure and Galahad's achievement of the sacred quest. Malory, whose *Morte Darthur* was printed by Caxton in 1485, drew his materials from a large number of French and English sources, and not always from the finest version of a given romance. Thus about a third of it is from a French prose *Tristan*, which gives an inferior account of its eponymous hero to that in the earlier tales. His first books were "reduced" from the various MSS. representing the *Merlin* and its extensions, and the prose *Lancelot* supplied the main foundation for the latter part, from Book XI. onwards.

English Metrical Romances.—After Layamon, for a century or more, Arthurian romance in English fell into the hands of journeymen minstrels, whose work is of small account in comparison with the finished poems or the strange, mystical prose romances then being written in French. The metrical chronicles of Robert of Gloucester and Peter Langtoft have already been mentioned. More complicated metrical effects were attempted in the Northern poem *Sir Tristrem*, attributed, perhaps through confusion with the Anglo-Norman Thomas, to the famous Thomas of Erceldoune. The results are, however, not very gratifying, at least to modern ears, especially in comparison with the easy couplets of the French poem. Not much superior in accomplishment are the 10,000 lines that have survived of a Kentish poet's rendering of the *Merlin* romance, entitled *Arthur and Merlin*.

Early in the 14th century those worthy renderings of the exquisite Breton lays appeared, *Sir Orfeo*, *Sir Degare*, *Emarè*, and *Le Freine*. Then, later in the century, there was a fresh outburst of poetic activity, among the firstfruits of which was a fine adaptation of Chrétien's *Yvain* under the title *Ywain and Gawain*. About 1350–60 a poet of strong national leanings, both in his patriotic fervour and his preference for Old English metre, wrote a poem known as the "Thornton" *Morte Arthure* after the scrivener, Robert Thornton, who wrote the MS. preserved at

Lincoln. Reasons of a doubtful character have been adduced for identifying the anonymous poet with Huchown of the Awle Ryale, otherwise "The gude Sir Hew of Eglintoun," a Scottish lawyer and statesman mentioned by Dunbar in his *Lament for the Makeris*.[1] To the same poet, on ingenious but not convincing grounds, have been attributed *Pearl, Cleanness and Patience, The Destruction of Troy*, and others among the best productions of this era.

This *Morte Arthure* is a very free paraphrase of Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrative of Arthur's later career, especially the war with Lucius. So free is it in places that the writer inadvertently betrays himself in allusions to contemporary events, talking of "Spanyolis" in his account of the sea-fight, evidently having in mind the recent victory over the Spaniards off Winchelsea, and making Arthur's overthrow of the Emperor a facsimile of Crécy. The poem may, in fact, be regarded as an indirect eulogy of Edward III., whose prowess is reflected in King Arthur. It is one of the most original of our Arthurian poems, and its splendid descriptive passages lent many a magical phrase to Malory. The martial ring of the verse is like that of Layamon and the old Saxon war-epics:

Then Sir Gawain greeted with his grey een,
For grief of his good men that he should guide;
He wist that they wounded were and weary forfought;
And what for wonder and woe all his wit failed.
And then sighing he said with springing tears,
"With Saracens beset are we on every side;
I sigh not for myself, so help our Lord,
But for to see us surprised my sorrow is the more.
Be doughty to-day, yon dukes shall be yours!
For dear God, this day, dread ye no weapon.
We shall end this day as excellent knights,
Heir to endless joy with the stainless angels.
Though we have unwittingly wasted ourselves,
We shall work all weal in the worship of Christ.
We shall, spite yon Saracens, I sicker you my troth,
Sup with our Saviour solemnly in heaven,
In presence of that precious prince of all others,
With prophets, and patriarchs, and apostles full noble,
Before his freelike face that formed us all.
Yonder to yon yieldsoons, he that yields him ever,
Quilst he is quick and unquelled with hands,
Be he nevermore saved nor succoured of Christ,
But Satan his soul may sink into hell."
Then grimly Sir Gawain grips his weapon,
Against that great battle he graiths him soon;
Readily of his rich sword he rights the chains,
In he shocks his shield, shrinks he no longer. . . .
He rives the rank steel, he rips the mail;
There might he renk him arrest, his reason was passed!
He fell in a frenzy for fierceness of heart.[2]

[1] I. Gollancz, *Pearl*, pp. xliii–xlv; G. Neilson, *Huchown of the Awle Ryale* (Glasgow, Maclehose, 1902); *Cambridge History of English Literature*, I., pp. 320–34, II., pp. 115–24.

[2] Freely modernized.

Gawain and the Grene Knight.—A still finer poem, assigned by some critics to the same author, is the romance of *Gawain and the Grene Knight*, in alliterative verse relieved by short lyrical rhyming lines. This is the best piece of story-telling among them all, and the most spirited portrayal of the rich and crowded life of Arthur's court, as a courtier of the Angevin kings conceived it.

Synopsis.—*At Camelot, where Arthur and his knights are assembled, a gigantic unknown knight, clad in green and carrying a Danish axe, challenges any knight present to an exchange of blows, on the condition, clinched by an oath, that if the stranger submit to the first blow he shall have the right to return it at the end of a year. Gawain accepts the challenge, and with one blow strikes off the giant's head. The Green Knight picks up the head, and rides off with it under his arm, reminding Gawain of his engagement. Gawain keeps the tryst appointed, and is entertained at a castle, where his host leaves him for three days in charge of his wife. This beautiful lady subjects Gawain to a severe trial of his truth and loyalty, but her temptations prove unavailing. When the time comes for him to submit his neck to the Green Knight's axe, he receives a mere scratch, and the stranger reveals himself as Gawain's host, the fair lady's husband, and declares that Gawain has proved himself the most faultless knight on earth. In singular contrast with this is Tennyson's description of the favourite hero of the English romancers as "false and adulterous."*

The Awntyrs (Adventures) *of Arthur at the Tarn Wathelyne* and *Golagros and Gawain* are two romances of about the same date (*c.* 1370), and not unsimilar in general character. The former gives a thrilling picture of a fearful shape emerging from a Cumberland tarn, and revealing itself to Guenevere and Gawain as Guenevere's mother suffering torments for her sins. In the other, the chief subject is a knightly encounter between Gawain and a powerful foe, followed by an act of exalted magnanimity on the part of Gawain, who prefers to accept shame rather than act ungenerously. In *The Wedding of Sir Gawain*, this chivalrous knight appears again in a noble rôle.

Lovelich and other Versifiers.—Most of the other Arthurian romances were the work of ruder minstrels. Such was the indefatigable skinner, Henry Lovelich, who turned the elephantine *Grand Saint Graal* into jog-trot couplets (*c.* 1450), and rendered the overgrown romance of *Merlin* into a wooden kind of verse. Lovelich bequeathed us more than 50,000 lines of this sort:

So whanne this Feste tho comen was,
The peple gan semblen into that place,
And hit assaiedon there everychon,
But of al that peple was there not on
That the sword there owt taken myhte;
Hit was the lasse wondyr: they hadden non rhyte.

Harking back to the previous century, we find another *Morte Arthure*, a decade or two later than the Thornton poem, not epical and Anglo-Saxon in tone, but romantic, and not alliterative but in stanzas, like the following, which have no splendour of style but at any rate flow pleasantly:

The kynge tornyd hym there he stode,
To syr Bedwere with wordys kene:
" Have Excalaber, my swerde good,
A better brond was neuyr sene,
Go, caste it in the salt flode
And thou shalt se wonder, as I wene.
Hye the faste, for crosse on Rode,
And telle me what thou hast ther sene."

This poem, like its earlier namesake, was much used by Malory, and the reader has, of course, recognized the incident immortalized by Tennyson. It was also the source of that exquisite idyll, the love-tragedy of Elaine.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

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Chapter 5. THE MATTER OF FRANCE: CAROLINGIAN AND OTHER ROMANCES

The *Chanson de Roland*—Origin of the *Chansons de Geste*—Carolingian Romances in English—Other Romances of French Origin—Amis and Amiloun

The "Chanson de Roland."—Wace tells how at the battle of Hastings the minstrel Taillefer rode into the fray singing of Charlemagne and of Roland and Oliver and the knights who died at Roncesvalles. This was the subject of the earliest of the *chansons de geste*, the *Chanson de Roland*, which is also in many respects the finest. It was probably finished in its present literary form during the latter half of the 11th century; the best manuscript, written in England and preserved at Oxford, dates from a century later. Though it contains a nucleus of fact, careful research has shown that in this and all the other *chansons* history has been completely transformed. The battle of Roncesvalles, described by the *trouvère* as the encounter of two mighty hosts of Franks and Saracens, was in reality a mere rearguard action, taking place in 778, in which a part of the Frankish army was set upon and defeated by the Gascon inhabitants of the mountain region between France and Spain. An elaborate plot is constructed, hingeing on the treason of Roland's enemy Ganelon, so as to make the catastrophe sound plausible without hurting patriotic feeling.

Origin of the "Chansons de Geste."—The theory that the *chansons* grew into the extant form of continuous poems out of shorter lays composed by minstrels contemporary with or very little later than the events which they celebrated has now been exploded. They are not an historical *épopée* directly begotten of the events themselves; they are not types of popular epic, but imaginative works deliberately composed in order to furnish a picturesque account of certain traditional heroes. An examination of the place-names occurring in any of the *chansons* shows that they are all closely associated with certain pilgrims' ways and certain abbeys and other shrines where the tombs of Girard de Roussillon and other paladins were a source of revenue to the monks who preserved them. Actual persons had existed answering to the foremost heroes of the poems; but the records of their careers in the *chansons* are fantastic, and their actual achievements are for the most part ignored. The process of development seems to have been roughly as follows. The monkish guardians of a shrine, desirous of glorifying the relics under their charge, would put forth, perhaps in all good faith, an historical account of the founders of their abbey or the persons entombed there. This account would probably take the form of a Latin biography, such as the *Vita Gerardi*, relating the history of Girard de Roussillon, which corresponds in main lines to the *chanson de geste* known by the hero's name. The Latin life would then be converted into a metrical story

for the unlearned. As M. Bédier, who has made a thoroughgoing inquiry into the origins of the whole family of *chansons de geste*, tersely puts it, "These fictions took the shape of a story of adventure and strife, at once religious and heroic—a *chanson de geste* having the distinctive features of a hagiography, the life of a saint having the distinctive features of a *chanson de geste*." It is worth noting that the genealogy of the Arthurian story is precisely similar. Geoffrey of Monmouth writes a Latin history, drawn largely from Bede and Nennius, who obtained their history to a large extent from Orosius; Wace and Layamon, and on the Continent Chrétien de Troyes and the rest of the chivalric poets, turned this material into the more acceptable shape of metrical romance. The supposed burial-place of King Arthur at Glastonbury even played an analogous part in the genesis of the *Historia Regum Britanniæ* to that in the *chansons* of the shrines containing the bones of Charlemagne's paladins.

General Character of the "Chansons de Geste."—Thus the epical Matter of France, whilst it reached its maturity before the finest blossoming of the Arthurian literature, had by no means so remote an origin, although as it degenerated very ancient traditions became embedded in it, such as the Teutonic folk-tale of the dwarf Oberon (identified with Alberic of the *Nibelungenlied*) who plays so romantic a part in *Huon of Bordeaux*. Before they began to be corrupted by the taste for novelties, the *chansons de geste* were severely epical in spirit and style. Love was not among the prominent motives. There were no heroines. But in the more romantic poetry which succeeded them the resources of rhetorical wit are exhausted in describing the beauty of women, whom the *chansons*, if they mention them at all, dismiss with a single epithet. The *chansons* were written for men; the romances, like the modern novel, were probably meant chiefly for feminine readers. And, as Professor Wilmotte neatly puts it, "On chantait la geste; on lisait le roman." Both kinds were essentially aristocratic, in subject, sentiment, and appeal.

CAROLINGIAN ROMANCE IN ENGLISH

The English romances of Charlemagne and his peers represent the French *romans d'aventure*, the late versions or *remaniements* (rehandlings) that were produced when new interests—love, knight-errantry, and fantastic adventure—had adulterated the simple warlike spirit of the original *chanson de geste*. There are no mediæval poems in English breathing the austere heroism of the old epic, unless it be Layamon's attempt to make a national saga of the story of Arthur. When the English minstrels tried their hand on the current French romances, they found the *chansons* and the newer continuations and *remaniements* forming an immense literature, from which they selected to suit the taste of their audiences.

This poetic literature falls into three or four large groups, known collectively in French as (*a*) the *Geste du Roi*, the cycle of Charlemagne, comprising a number

of poems from *Roland* to *Huon of Bordeaux*, composed in the 12th century; (*b*) the *Geste de Guillaume d'Orange*, a large family of romances, dating from the 12th and 13th centuries, the finest single poem being the splendid *Aliscans*, celebrating the defeat of Guillaume near Arles in 793; (*c*) the cycle, mainly of the 13th century, relating to the struggles of the great nobles against Charlemagne; and (*d*) the *Geste des Lorrains*, centering in Raoul de Cambrai.

Only fragments remain of an English rendering of *Roland*, made in the 14th century. From the *chanson Otinel*, in which Roland figures, came two English poems, *Duke Roland and Sir Ottuell of Spain*, and a very free adaptation entitled *Otuel*. *Rauf Coilyear* is a late Scots poem of Charlemagne, composed in an alliterative rhyming metre. *Rowland and Vernagu* and the *Sege of Melayne* (Siege of Milan) tell late and extravagant stories of Roland, Charlemagne, and Archbishop Turpin. *Huon of Bordeaux* was Englished from late prose redactions by Lord Berners (*c.* 1525–33), the translator of Froissart; it was one of the most popular of all the romances, and had been expanded in a series of continuations. It is in this tale that the dwarf Oberon, king of the fairies, plays a picturesque part, inspiring one of Shakespeare's most poetical creations and also the fine epic of Wieland bearing the name of *Oberon*.

Sir Ferumbras (*c.* 1380) and *The Sowdone of Babylone* (*c.* 1400) are poems in homely verse recounting the marvellous incidents of Charlemagne's wars with the Saracens and relief of Rome; they belong to the *Fierabras* cycle, among the latest but most popular of the French *chansons*. *Fierabras*, in a prose redaction later on, was the main source of Caxton's *Charles the Grete* (1485). Caxton also translated and printed (1489) a typical romance from the group relating the story of Charlemagne and his rebellious vassals, *Renaud de Montauban*, entitling it *The Right Pleasaunt and Goodly Historie of the Foure Sonnes of Aymon*. The earliest text of the original *chanson* is in alexandrines of the 12th century. Caxton used a 15th-century prose version.

OTHER ROMANCES OF FRENCH ORIGIN

Putting on one side for the moment the poems with classical and oriental subjects and those based on native English legends, we find many romances derived from French originals besides those that come under the Arthurian canon. Hugh of Rutland's *Ipomedon* was twice translated in rhyme and once in prose. There were also several translations of the popular *Parthenope de Blois*. The alliterative *William of Palerne* is a rather clumsy rendering of the highly romantic *Guillaume de Palerme*, the hero of which is magically transformed into a werwolf. Another story of metamorphosis originally told in Latin prose by Jean d'Arras (1387) is the romance of *Mélusine*, of which there is an English prose version, *Melusyne*, and also a rendering in seven-line stanzas, called the *Romans of Partenay*, drawn from a French poem in the ordinary octosyllabic couplets (*c.* 1400). Translation as often as not fell into

the hands of professional hacks, and the stanzas are mostly not far above doggerel. But even the hack was moved to poetry by the pathos of the elfin-wife's parting from her husband Raymond, whose curiosity had brought on their heads this doom by asking the secret of her mysterious disappearances. At once she is transfigured into the likeness of a great serpent, and flies round the palace uttering dolorous cries, finally with a loud lament vanishing for ever.

Adieu, wurthieste ! Adieu, with all honour !
Adieu, my suete loue prented in hert sad !
Our lorde the aide and be thi concellour !
With-out more spech a lepe ther she made,
(Seyng the Barons all that ther were had),
Thorugh a fenistre so passed and wend
When of hyr wurdes thys had made an ende.

The alliterative *Chevelere Assigne* was a 14th-century version of the popular romance, the *Chevalier au Cygne*, which was afterwards reduced into prose as *Helyas, Knight of the Swan*, and had long currency. It celebrates the deeds of the Crusader Godefroy de Bouillon, reputed to be the son of a swan-maiden.

Amis and Amiloun.—Other exceptions occurred to the third-rate quality of the native adaptations of foreign works. Perhaps no mediæval story was re-told in more numerous or more various forms than that of the old *chanson de geste, Amis et Amile*, which was based on a Latin life embodying a legend of the Dark Ages. The subject was the friendship between two nobles—dubbed knights of Charlemagne by the French version—friendship self-sacrificing even unto death. In the English redaction, which appeared in the 13th century, the parts of the two friends are reversed, and the central interest of the story is the passion of Belisante, daughter of the King of Lombardy, for Sir Amys. The characters of the pair are developed with no little realism, and the sensuous charm of the garden scenery amid which the intrigue goes on brings a foretaste of the Renaissance.

Up her rose that swete wight,
Into the garden she went full right,
With maidens hende and free ;
The summer's day was fair and bright,
The sun him shone through leam of light,
That seemly was on to see.
She heard the foules great and small,
The sweet note of the nightingale,
Full merrily sing on tree.
Ac her heart was so hard i-brought,
On love-longing was all her thought,
No might her gamen no glee.

Belisante woos her knight with the self-abandonment to passion that came in with Chrétien de Troyes and the more sophisticated *romans d'aventure*, and when Amys protests his loyalty to the king she flies out upon him.

That merry maiden of great renown
Answered, "Sir knight, thou n'ast no crown![1]
For God that bought thee dear,
Whether art thou priest other parson?
Other thou art monk, other canon,
That preachest me thus here?
Thou no shouldst have been no knight
To gon among maidens bright;
Thou shouldst have been a frere!
He that learned thee thus to preach,
The devil of hell I him beteach,
My brother though he were!"

Thus the piece of simple hagiography has passed through the stage of hero-saga to the form of a passionate idyll inspired with the new ideals of the age of Courtly Love.

[1] A monk's shaven crown.

Chapter 6. THE MATTER OF ROME: CLASSICAL, ORIENTAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS ROMANCES

Ancient History in the Middle Ages—Romances of Alexander, Thebes, and the Orient—Fables and Tales—Romances of English Origin: *Horn, Havelok, Beves, Guy of Warwick, Fulk Fitz Warine, The Gest of Robin Hood*

Ancient History in the Middle Ages.—If the lapse of a few hundred years was enough to produce an imaginary account of the events celebrated in the *chansons de geste* and the romances which were their derivatives, a still more visionary treatment of things more remote in time was to be expected. The Matter of Rome is a concise phrase for a mass of pseudo-history concerning the Greeks and Romans which the Middle Ages derived, not from the historians, nor directly from Homer and the cyclic poets, but from irresponsible compilers at a second or a third remove. Their authorities on the Trojan War were a certain Dictys Cretensis, probably hailing from the 2nd century A.D., who gave himself out to have been an eye-witness of the events, and a 6th-century writer, Dares Phrygius, whose version was more flattering to the Trojans. From the *Ephemeris Belli Trojani* of the one and the *Excidio Trojæ* of the other, or more probably from the expanded accounts of intervening writers, were obtained the materials for a *Roman de Troie* (*c.* 1165) by a French clerk, Benoît de Sainte More, who dedicated his work to Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II., and a Latin prose *Historia Destructionis Trojæ* (1287) by Guido delle Colonne. These were in turn a basis for the many romances of the Trojan War which appeared in various European languages. Guido was translated in a long alliterative poem, *The Gest Historial of the Destruction of Troy*, and Benoît seems to have been abridged in a poem in couplets, *The Siege of Troy*, which was utilized by Gower in the *Confessio Amantis*. Besides the romantic interest attaching to the highly embellished stories of the Homeric heroes, Englishmen had another motive for their enjoyment of tales of Troy in the legend of the descent of the people of Britain from the Trojans through Brutus, the supposed eponymous founder of the kingdom. Wace's and Layamon's *Bruts* and the Welsh *Brut Tysilio*, an abridgment of Geoffrey, were but the most celebrated of many compositions, principally French, purporting to relate the annals of Britain.

Romances of Alexander, Thebes, and the Orient.—The further growth of this legendary history was stimulated by the Crusades and acquaintance with Oriental as well as Byzantine and Alexandrian romance. A fabulous history of Alexander had had its beginning in the Greek account, known as the Pseudo-Callisthenes, which was translated into Latin early in the 4th century A.D., and epitomized in Leo the Presbyter's *Historia Alexandri Magni*, in the 10th century. The French *Roman d'Alixandre*

of Lambert le Tort and its *remaniement* by Alexandre de Bernay (to the twelve-syllable verse of which was first applied the term *alexandrine*) appeared in the 11th century. Hence came Eustace of Kent's *Roman de Toute Chevalerie* and the finest of the English poems, *King Alisaunder*, both of the 13th century; the fragmentary *Wars of Alexander;* and the Scots poem *Alexander the Great*, to mention no others. These romances were as mythical in foundation and as thoroughly imbued with the ideas of chivalry and lust for the marvellous as any of the romances of knight-errantry previously enumerated. Closely akin in manner and matter was the 13th-century romance *Richard Coer de Lyon*, based on a lost Anglo-French original.

Romances of Thebes.—Similar were the adventures and transformations of the tale of Thebes, the mediæval source for which was the *Thebaid* of Statius. A 12th-century French poet, and later Boccaccio in his *Teseide*, Chaucer in his masterpiece *The Knight's Tale*, and the plodding Lydgate in the huge *Troy Book* (*c.* 1420), were the principal purveyors of parts or of the whole of the fully developed story.

Byzantine Romances.—Of the sentimental romances derived from Byzantine story-tellers, who were largely responsible for the Oriental ingredients in European romance, the most famous was the *Cligès* of Chrétien de Troyes, and the finest English example was *Flores and Blancheflour*, a tale of the separation and sufferings of two lovers, ultimately reunited. This was somehow connected with Carolingian romance by the identification of the heroine with the mother of Berthe aux Grands Pieds, who gave her name to a French story. *William of Palerne*, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, the religious stories the *King of Tarsys* and *Sir Isumbras*, and some other late specimens of *romans d'aventure* and the like, belong wholly or in part to the Byzantine tradition. Calumniated innocence, lost children brought up by outlandish foster-parents, adventures among Saracens, giants, and dragons, magic and miracles, are the usual stock-in-trade, and the moral is either sentimental or religious.

Fables and Tales.—A large proportion of the popular tales in such didactic collections as the *Gesta Romanorum* and the *Disciplina Clericalis* are of Oriental provenance. *Dame Siriz*, which went through many languages before it appeared in English verse about the middle of the 13th century, seems to show an Indian origin in the doctrine of metempsychosis implied in the transformation of the Dame's victim into a bitch. The satirical *Land of Cokaygne* is a tale in verse that forms a close parallel to the French *fabliaux*, though its paradise of gluttony and idleness may be a bit of Eastern fantasy. Several of Chaucer's coarser stories, such as the Summoner's and the Reeve's tales, are also close analogues of the French *fabliaux*, which were essentially bourgeois, realistic, and satirical, as compared with the aristocratic tone of the romance. There were Middle English collections of fables, ascribed to Æsop, but really derived from Phædrus. The *Ysopet* of Marie de France was apparently based on these English fables. Lydgate began a similar book of fables, but finished only seven. The remoter sources of many fables, especially those contain-

ing stories of beasts, were the Buddhist *Jatakas*, dating from the 4th century B.C. or earlier, and *Panchatantra*, which are represented in Syriac and Arabic by the collection known as *Kalilah and Dimnah*, or the *Fables of Bidpai*. No doubt, the Greek fables collected under the name of Æsop were, with some possible exceptions, independent of these; but most of them must have originated in Asia Minor in times when there was considerable intercourse with Persia and other Eastern neighbours. From the very different Low German beast epic, *Reynard the Fox*, which grew to such large dimensions on the Continent, there were only a few loans in English; Caxton was the principal debtor, translating and printing a prose version (1481).

CHANSONS DE GESTE AND ROMANCES OF ENGLISH ORIGIN

The stories of Horn and Rimenhild, Havelok the Dane, Guy of Warwick, Beves of Hampton, and some others of smaller renown, are among the popular stories of English heroes, the oldest literary form of which is in French verse by Anglo-Norman poets. If there were earlier forms they have disappeared.

Lays of Horn and of Havelok.—The *chanson* of *Horn* (*c.* 1170), by an Anglo-Norman Thomas, is an elaborate work probably based on a French version of an Anglo-Danish story. An older and ruder version is the English *Geste of King Horn*, the dual elements of which—Irish-Norse saga and French romance—may have blended any time between 1100 and 1250; and a degenerate version of Thomas's poem, *Horn Childe*, was afterwards put into clumsy conventional stanzas, of the kind that Chaucer satirized in *Sir Thopas*.

> *Horn, son of the slaughtered King of Suddene (Isle of Man), is carried in a boat to Westerness, where the king adopts him as his foster-child. The king's daughter Rimenhild loves him, and they secretly plight their troth. Horn is betrayed and banished, and after years of vicissitude comes back to reveal himself and save his mistress from wedding the aged King of Fenice.*

A better story, and one still more suggestive of the epical spirit of a lost saga, is *Havelok the Dane* (*c.* 1300).

> *Havelok is a Danish prince, and Goldburgh an English princess, both disinherited by their guardians. Havelok is recognized and protected by the fisherman Grim (whose name is commemorated in the town of Grimsby), and becomes a scullion in the household where the princess is kept under close guard. The royal maiden has been promised that she shall receive the tallest, the fairest, and strongest man in the country for her husband. Her malicious guardian marries her to the stalwart Havelok in derision. But supernatural signs betray his royal birth, and the sequel is as happy as the listeners to the minstrel could desire.*

Havelok was in all probability in origin a Norse saga of Olaf or Anlaf. The legend was made the subject of two French poems in the 12th century, one of which, in the brief form of a Breton lay, has been preserved. The English *Lay*

of Havelok is nearly three times as long, fuller of interest, and richer in picturesque traits of character.

Beves, Guy of Warwick, Fulk Fitz Warine, etc.—Much inferior in poetic merit, but more to the taste of a public fed upon the marvels and mechanical variations of decadent romance, were the stories of Beves, who refuses to abjure Christianity for the sake of the Saracen princess Josian but wins her by his prowess, and of Guy of Warwick, who wins his high-born love and then devotes himself to penance and dies in a hermitage. Only a prose redaction exists of the Anglo-French *chanson* of *Fulk Fitz Warine*, the most vigorous and realistic of the stories of entirely English origin. It is historical in basis, legend simply having come in to combine two actual persons in the hero. Fulk was a stubborn noble who took up arms against King John ; and his life is full of deeds of splendid heroism, hairbreadth escapes, and scenes of thrilling drama ; the characters are forcibly drawn, and the local details of Ludlow and the neighbourhood are accurate.

The Gest of Robin Hood, which is a gathering of ballads into a loose epic, done in the 16th century, may be grouped with these earlier stories of England. It probably grew up during the two hundred years or more preceding, and its heroes, Robin Hood, Little John, and Clim of the Clough, are of the same native stamp as Hereward the Wake and Fulk Fitz Warine. The ballads of *Chevy Chase* and *Otterburn* are in the regular tradition of English war-songs. *Hind Horn*, the briefest version of the old tale of Horn and Rimenhild, is in its terse dramatic structure essentially a ballad, like *Sir Patrick Spens* or *Edward*. Both in England and in Scotland, this ballad literature, towards the end of the period under consideration and for some time after, was exceedingly rich in both quality and quantity. It is thoroughly native in character and style, though it is imbued with the romance spirit and has entirely relinquished the ancient moulds for rhyme (see p. 39 *supra*).

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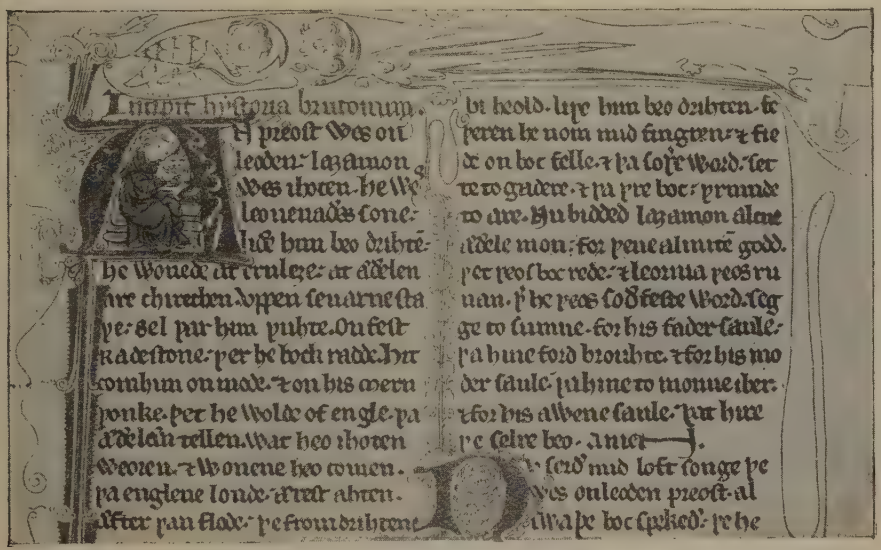
Chapter 7. NATIVE LITERATURE

Layamon and the new English National Spirit—The *Ormulum*—Robert of Gloucester and the English Literary Movement in the South-West—The *Cursor Mundi* in the North—Richard Rolle of Hampole, mystic, lyrical poet, and prose-writer—Robert of Brunne in East Anglia—Prose down to 1340—Narrative and Didactic Verse—Southern Poetry—The *Poema Morale*—Didactic Verse in lyrical form—William of Shoreham—*Pearl, Cleanness*, and *Patience*—Northern Legends—*The Harrowing of Hell*, etc.—*The Owl and the Nightingale*—Lyrical Pieces: religious, poems to the Virgin, etc., Thomas de Hales; secular, the *Cuckoo Song*, *Alysoun*, etc.—Political Verse

LAYAMON'S "BRUT"

Layamon (*c.* 1200), priest of Arnley (on Severn, North Worcestershire), stands forth as the first national poet of the new England.

He made it his aim to set forth the origins and the noble deeds of the men of Eng-



Lines from Layamon's "Brut."

land since the Flood. In a poem of over 32,000 lines he tells the story of the descendants of Brutus from the destruction of Troy to the fall of Cadwallader. His is a patriotism for country, not for race. Though he sings of the conquest of the Welsh by Athelstan the grandson of Alfred, he exults more in the victory of Christian Britain over the heathen Saxon "hounds" who begat him.

Sources.—Layamon's chief source was the Norman Wace (see p. 623). What other literary sources, if any, he drew from, we do not know; nor how far his many additions are original. (Among these are some of the finest passages, *e.g.* the Lament of Lear, the Coming and Passing of Arthur, the story of the Round Table.) But Welsh Border tradition of story, and English tradition of style and spirit, have evidently left their mark on his work.

His English Quality.—Layamon was no mere translator. He made his *Brut* not only English in language—in the whole poem there are scarce five score Romance words—but English in thought. His is the direct and homely utterance of the people, with its love of maxim and of simple dialogue, its pictures drawn from everyday experience. And he can leave great events alone for a moment, to gloat over a fox hunt. His work keeps alive the spirit of the old epic and saga; Weland is known to him, as is the old rough story of strong champions and mighty leaders of men. In his hands King Arthur is less a knight than a hero of saga, leading his band of thegns in deeds of personal valour. His Arthur is, in his world conquests, the Arthur of Geoffrey of Monmouth, fighting and conquering alike Pict and Scot, Irishman and Saxon, Dane and Frenchman, yea, the Roman Empire itself. But Layamon sees him not so much as the champion of the Celt against the Saxon, as the central figure in the past history of the land of the English. He is the type of the newborn nation, which was to be neither Anglo-Saxon nor Danish, nor Cymric nor Norman, but English.

Relation to Older and Newer Poetry.—Layamon stands at the parting of the ways between the old order and the new. The ancient spirit has been referred to: the new may be seen in the hero's sporting conduct towards his foes. In the English *Brut*, Arthur awakes the sleeping giant rather than take him at disadvantage.

The old form is still alive in Layamon's verse. His lines are the old short line of the Teutonic alliterative poetry. But regular alliteration has gone, and many of the staves are joined by rhyme. Sometimes we note the old two-stressed stave (*e.g.*, "Ich hatte Hengest. Hors is mi brother"); or a three-stressed line ("Nay, swa me helpe God. The alle domes weldeth"); or again a four- or even a five-stressed line, the precursor of the new syllabic scansion (*e.g.*, "Ne scal ich navere his mon bicume," "To Londene lay the archebissopes stol").

THE "ORMULUM"

The Normanizing of the higher ranks of the clergy apparently caused no sudden break in the religious instruction of the masses. Several extant collections of 12th-century English sermons vouch for the continuance of the Bede and Ælfric tradition, at any rate south of the Humber. The old form of the homily is the Gospel text, with paraphrase and commentary, the interpretation following the traditional allegorical method of Isidore, Gregory, and Augustine. It was not until at least two

centuries after the Conquest that metrical Lives of the Saints supplanted the older biblical teaching in the south of England ; while in the north the homily still held its own, but civilized by the Norman influence into a less heavy style and the more pleasing form of verse.

Orm.—Chronologically, geographically, morphologically, the *Ormulum* forms the transition between the old and the new. The poem was written about the year 1200 ; probably in Lincolnshire, certainly in what had been Danish territory, as vocabulary, grammar, and author's name all indicate. Of Orm we know only that he and his brother Walter, who set him his task, were both monks of the order of St. Austin. Orm planned to put into English verse Gospel paraphrases for the whole year, with their appropriate interpretations and applications, a task involving commentary on over 240 texts. As only one incomplete MS. has come down to us, we do not know whether the author ever actually finished this gigantic labour. The MS. offers us some thirty homilies (not all complete with paraphrase, etc.), prefaced by a dedication to Walter and an introduction dealing with the Fall and the Redemption.

The Work.—In the incomplete form we possess, the work runs into 10,000 long lines. The style is diffuse, the repetition endless. There is not one line of poetry, not one glimpse of brightness, not one break in the deadly monotony from beginning to end ; a striking contrast to the French-influenced Northern homilies of the next century. Yet even Orm could not escape altogether the influence of culture. He has chosen as his metre the iambic septenarius ; and he sticks to his 8's and 7's without a single variation. He makes no use of rhyme, and but little and apparently accidental use of alliteration.

Though no poet, Orm is one of the most striking figures in the history of English knowledge. His is the first recorded conscious and deliberate attempt to introduce consistency into our spelling system. And in his warning to the scribes who may come after him, he speaks as one having authority. His autograph work is to be copied correctly, without change of rhyme, vocabulary, or spelling. Let the copyist, he says, take care that he write one letter twice whenever it is written so ; otherwise he cannot write the words correctly in English.

Orm was a scientist, born out of due time. His separation of the various sounds of the letter *g*, and his invention of a new symbol for one of them, entitle him to be called our first phonetician.

OTHER NATIVE WRITERS

ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER.—In the latter half of the 13th century there began in the South-West an important English literary movement. The monks of Gloucester evidently had at hand all the principal current historical works, Latin, French, and English, in addition to their library of biblical, ecclesiastical, and hagiographical literature. And it was their literary activity that put into shape the beginnings of the

collections of English metrical Lives of the Saints known to us as the "Southern Legends," which multiplied to vast proportions in the following century, and remained popular for more than 200 years. It is to two, or perhaps three, of these learned monks that we owe the work known as *Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle* (*c.* 1300), Robert being the principal author.

His "Chronicle."—Like the *Brut*, the *Chronicle* begins with the destruction of Troy and deals at great length with the story of Arthur. The greater part of it is compilation, translation, and tradition, the historical value of which is little. The last third of the work, however, is of different quality. Here the authors were dealing with matters more within their ken, and Robert's own personal knowledge of the Barons' Wars is good contemporary history. The poem is also of linguistic interest, as showing what absorption of Romance elements took place in our language during the three generations after Layamon.

The *Chronicle* is about a third longer than the *Ormulum*. It is in a kind of rough common metre, in which the use, by accident or artifice, of alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, of variation in number of unstressed syllables, and even occasionally of the omission of a foot, has at least prevented dull monotony if it has not produced polished verse.

The style of the *Chronicle* is simple and direct, the style of a man who, without parade of his considerable learning, desires only to put his facts clearly before his lowly fellow-countrymen, who still "holdeth to Engliss." The chronicler, as a patriot, is a worthy successor of Layamon; but as a poet he falls far behind his predecessor.

Style.—The following lines, from a long passage in praise of England, "the best land of all," will give some idea of Robert's descriptive work. He is praising the Three Wonders of England.

Upo the plein of Salesbury that other wonder is,
That Stonheng is icluped,[1] none more [2] wonder nis.
Evene upright and suithe [3] heigh, that wonder hit is to se,
The stones stondeth there so grete, none more [4] nemowe [5] be;
And othere liggeth [6] heie above, that man may be aferd,
That eche man wondry may, hou hii [7] were ferst arered.

"CURSOR MUNDI."—In the first quarter of the 14th century the North of England (probably the diocese of Durham) produced, in poetic form, a most comprehensive work on the story of the Universe.

Men delight, says its author, in rhymed stories, "Inglis, Frankys, and Latine," and he gives in his prologue an interesting list of the current romances. But the popular taste is for "foly luve" and "vanite." Men skilled in rhyme should rather sing of a love which does not change. And so he has planned a "lastand wark" in honour of the Mother of God.

[1] called. [2] greater. [3] very. [4] greater. [5] cannot. [6] others lie. [7] they.

From the Deliberations of the Trinity, the Creation of the World, and the Fall of Man, his poem covers the whole of Old Testament history as well as the story of the Redemption; and passing on to the Finding of the Cross, and then to the Last Judgment and the Life to Come, closes with praise of her in whose honour it was written.

The Author.—The poet takes up the cudgels on behalf of the English language. There are rhymes enough, he says, written for Frenchmen; but one ought to use the speech that is best understood, and the speech of the English nation is English.

> Seldom was, for ani chance,
> Praised Inglis tong in France.
> Give we ilkan [1] thare langage,
> Me think we do tham non outrage.

Among the works which are clearly due to the direct influence of our author, may be mentioned the York and the Towneley Plays of the next century; and it would seem not unreasonable to believe that the masterly way in which he put his views into practice, influenced largely the rapid growth of vernacular literature that immediately followed him.

The Work.—The *Cursor Mundi* is the work of an artist. One finds in it no hotch-potch of the numerous sources from which it was taken: it follows throughout a carefully measured plan. The style is clear and flowing, vigorous yet restrained; so that not even the enormous length of the poem (wellnigh 30,000 lines) need alarm the modern reader.

The poet uses mainly the four-stressed line, and that with a freedom and ease not inferior to Chaucer's own. He has chiefly employed the rhymed couplet; but he varies by the occasional introduction of series of rhymes. In one passage he uses the dignified septenarius with great skill: to another he gives solemnity by introducing the rhyme-form *a a b c c b*. As a craftsman he has no equal until Chaucer.

Some of the sources of the *Cursor Mundi* have been established by modern research. Chief among them are the Vulgate, the Apocryphal Gospels, and the then famous *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor of Troyes. The author was familiar also with the whole range of contemporary literature, French and English, grave and gay, as well as with the whole ecclesiastical literature of his age. But one finds in the *Cursor* no trace of laborious translation: the vast store of knowledge it shows has undergone sifting and re-forming in the author's own mind, has become part of himself. One feels that no matter what new sources of his work may yet be discovered, the originality and the genius of the poet will remain unimpugned.

RICHARD ROLLE OF HAMPOLE.—One of the most remarkable personalities in the history of English thought is that of Richard Rolle, the greatest of the early English Mystics.

[1] everybody.

Life.—He was born about the year 1300, at Thornton, in the North Riding. In his nineteenth year he abandoned theological studies at Oxford for the life of a hermit: "in solitudine Christus loquitur ad cor." A friend of his father's gave him food and raiment, and a cell on his estate. Here he spent four years in contemplation, until—as he tells us—he saw Heaven with the eye of the mind, and received the gift of the divine "warmth" and "sweetness," and, rarest gift of all, the knowledge of the "celestial harmony." After this he was "like Cain, a wanderer on the face of the earth," moving about Yorkshire from cell to cell wherever he found a welcome.

Views.—His efforts to induce others to "leave vanities and the snares of ruin" and to "soar from vice to Life," were not greatly successful. The laity had no use for his doctrine of *caritas;* and there is little wonder that the Church had still less use for a man who, Catholic as he was at heart, yet sought no place in the ecclesiastical system, and even dared to teach that "God alone is the hermit's abbot, prior, and provost." And so he determined to write.

Works.—His earliest works were lyrics, in praise of Christ and the Virgin. The following selections are typical:

My trewest tresoure sa trayturly taken,
Sa bytterly boundyn with bytand[1] bandes;
How sone[2] of thi seruandes[3] was thou forsaken,
And lathly[4] for my lufe hurled[5] with thair handes.

My sang is in syghyng whil I dwell in this way,
My lyfe is in langyng, that byndes me nyght and day,
Til I come til my kyng, that I won[6] with hym may,
And se his fayre schynyng, and lyfe that lastes aye.

The joy that men hase sene, es lyckend tyl the haye[7]
That now es fayre and grene, and now wytes awaye.[8]
Swylk[9] es this worlde, I wene, and bees til domes-daye
Al in trauel and tene,[10] fle that na man it maye.

Richard wrote freely in both Latin and English, and he made in both a striking use of alliteration.

He soon began to write prose also. He recorded his theory of the anchorite's life in two long Latin works, the *Melum Contemplativorum* and the *De Incendio Amoris*, and in many short treatises. He wrote a Latin commentary on the Psalter, and numerous prayers, sermons, and meditations.

After years of wandering he had settled down near Ainderby. Twelve miles from his cell dwelt another anchorite, Margaret Kirkby, "dilecta sua discipula," whom he loved "perfecta caritatis affectione," and for whose sake perhaps he began to write in English. At any rate two of his best-known English works were written for her, the long epistle entitled *The Form of Perfect Living*, and a new commentary on the Psalter.

[1] biting. [2] soon. [3] by thy servants. [4] hatefully. [5] rough treated.
[6] dwell. [7] grass. [8] passes away. [9] such. [10] travail and vexation.

From his cell near Ainderby he seems to have acted as spiritual correspondent to other Yorkshire recluses. One of his English epistles, that entitled *I sleep and my heart wakes*, is addressed to a nun of Yeddingham. This letter is an interesting example of Richard's style and method. With religious rhapsody he can combine simple common-sense. Of *paternosters* and *aves* he writes: "Take not tent that thou say many, bot that thou say hom wele."

Style.—His prose style is remarkable. Its rhythm is everywhere striking, but over and over again he carries on the argument in alliterative verse, sometimes for long passages: "Al perisches and passes that we with eghe see. It wanes into wrechednes, the welth of this worlde. Robes and riches rotes in the dike. Prowde payntyng slakes into sorow. Delites and drewrys [love] stynk sal ful sone.' In the second part of *I sleep*, he introduces a long passage of three-stressed verse, rhyming *a b a b*.

Another English letter is addressed to a nun of Hampole. Towards the end of his life Richard moved to South Yorkshire, and he died at Hampole in 1349. It may have been there that he wrote the poem on which his literary reputation has hitherto chiefly rested.

"The Pricke of Conscience."—*The Pricke of Conscience* is a poem in seven books, dealing with the life of the soul, on earth, before the judgment seat, and in the world to come. It is the work of a man well read in the learning of his age, and possessed of complete command of thought and expression. In spite of the subject-matter, the swing of some of the verse reminds one of Barbour. The latest critics, however, dispute the authorship of this work. Should they prove right, the reputation of Richard Rolle of Hampole can nevertheless bear the loss.

Conclusion.—He was an inspiration to writers of English down to the time of Wyclif. Numerous works of the 14th and early 15th centuries were ascribed to or founded on him. His fame indeed was his literary downfall; for the Lollards fathered some of their productions on him, and so ruined his repute both as writer and as saint. Yet he remains a spiritual ancestor of Wyclif and of the author of *Piers Plowman*.

ROBERT MANNYNG OF BRUNNE.—Shortly before the author of the *Cursor Mundi* conceived the idea of popularizing knowledge for his fellow-Northerners, similar useful work had been done for the laity of East Anglia.

"Handlyng Synne."—In 1303 Robert Mannyng of Brunne had begun to make a book "on Englyssh tonge" for "alle crystyn men undir sunne," particularly for the "lewed men" of Bourne and Sempringham. As men like to listen to rhymes and stories, they had best spend their time, he says, in hearing decent ones. So he made it his business to provide a long collection of stories both edifying and amusing.

Handlyng Synne is an exceedingly free translation of the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez* of William de Waddington. The main body of the poem, dealing with the Seven Deadly Sins, is preceded by reflections on the commandments, and followed by illustrations of the Seven Sacraments and Shrift. However, the title covers the subject-matter accurately enough, for as Robert himself states, wherever you open the book you will find sin.

Criticism of Life.—An attempt to summarize any of these pleasing tales would only spoil them; but a few short passages and phrases taken at random may serve to indicate the author's style.

Men and women should not be proud of their hair. They may arrange their locks and pat them into place; but at home, not "at the masse in the cherche." The author objects strongly to "bearded buckys" and to women who use powder to "make hem feyrere than God hem made." As for those who borrow clothes for a dance,

> That pore pryde, God hit lothes,
> That makes hem proude of other mennys clothes.

Tournaments lead to pride and covetousness, envy and lechery; and furthermore, when a man has been led into such venture—by some woman, of course,

> So is he beat there, for her love,
> That he may not sytte hys horse above.

Robert disapproves of miracle plays, except in the church; and with great relish he tells of the evil fate of minstrels and players.

As for other social diversions,

> Dynners are oute of skyl and resoun
> On the Sunday ere Hye Messe be doun.[1]
>
> Dances, karols and summer games,
> Of many such come many shames.
>
> Some wene that kyssyng is no synne,
> But grete peryl falleth therynne.
>
> This custoum ys also perylous,
> To lede a man to the alehouse;
> To do[2] hym drynke out of resoun,
> Or make hym drunke, that is tresoun.

Style.—The normal versification of *Handlyng Synne* may be seen well enough in the above quotations. But the poet does not hesitate to vary with a freer metre, *e.g.*

> Brunyng the bysshop of seynt Tolous,
> Wrote thys tale so merveylous.
>
> The lordes answere was sumwhat vyle,
> And that falleth evyl to a man gentyle.

---

[1] Done. [2] Make.

"The Story of England."—Thirty-five years later our author finished his second contribution to popular education. This is his *Story of England*, a rhymed chronicle based on Wace's *Brut* and on Pierre de Langtoft's *Chronicle*, but containing additions from other current histories as well as from the author's own observation. The *Story of England* is perhaps from the point of view of style an advance on Robert of Gloucester, but in other respects it falls behind the earlier chronicle. The interesting contemporary history which it offers is due mainly to Langtoft. Robert Mannyng's literary reputation may therefore rest upon his earlier work.

PROSE, DIDACTIC VERSE, SONGS, MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS, ETC.

Prose.—English prose in the period between the *Peterborough Chronicle* and Richard Rolle is not striking either in extent or in quality. It is entirely religious, and to a great extent mere translation from Latin or French; but as illustrating English habits of thought and the development of English syntax it may be reckoned "native literature."

It is confined to the South of England, and seems to be associated with Gloucester and Canterbury; but its authors are unknown, except that indefatigable translator into the English of Kent, Dan Michel of Northgate, whose *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (Remorse of Conscience) was completed at Canterbury in 1340.

Of all this early prose, special interest attaches to certain South-Western treatises written for women: the *Lives of SS. Katherine, Juliana, and Margaret*, encomiums of virginity; the amusing anti-connubial *Hali Meidenhad;* and the *Ancren Riwle*, which in spirit, style, and treatment stands in a class by itself.

Narrative and Didactic Verse.—The "Southern Legends" have been referred to above in connection with Robert of Gloucester. A few somewhat earlier poems, written in the same form and style, have come down to us—e.g., *The Woman of Samaria, The Passion of Our Lord*, and the more famous *Poema Morale*. In *Doomsday* and *Death* we find the same common metre, but in rhyming fours instead of pairs.

A good deal of this didactic and moralizing verse is in lyrical form, as for example in *Sinners Beware, The Duty of Christians*, and several versions of the *Debate of the Body and the Soul*. A specimen (modernized) may be in place:

Naked in sooth, and bare,
With wailing and with care,
Into this life we wind.
In like wise hence we fare,
And all our pride we there
Shall doff and leave behind.

Lyrical metres were chosen also by William of Shoreham (*c.* 1320) for a good part of his four or five thousand lines of exposition and instruction.

In the North the vernacular treatment of homilies, saints' Lives, etc., developed somewhat later, and there the verse took in the main the vigorous short-lined form of the *Cursor Mundi*. Of this type also are the dramatic *Harrowing of Hell*, and the Vernon version of the *Visit of SS. Michael and Paul to Hell*.

One cannot leave all this moralizing without a quotation (modernized) from *A Little Sooth Sermon*:

When the church they've entered on the holy day,
Everyone his love will view there if so he may.
One beholdeth Watkin with a full glad eye.
At home her paternoster well locked up doth lie.
To Masses and to Matins now attend they nought,
For Willikin and Watkin are their only thought

Here may fittingly be mentioned the best of all the Early Middle English poems, *The Owl and the Nightingale*. Founded on the model of the mediæval Latin *contentio*, this poem shows the unique feature of a debate confined to non-human disputants. The theme is Joy versus Gloom, and the poet has worked it out with astonishing skill and naturalness, hiding a seriousness of purpose under a light and graceful utterance. Critics have refused to believe that an Englishman could have accomplished this at the beginning of the 13th century, and have tried—so far in vain—to discover a French original. The metre owes much to the foreign influence, and the lightness of touch is certainly more Norman than Anglo-Saxon; but the unnamed poet was certainly as much the product of the two cultures as were Layamon and Robert of Gloucester, and his work is as English as is that of his great descendant Chaucer.

"Pearl," "Cleanness," and "Patience."—These three poems, by the unknown author of *Gawayne and the Green Knight*, may best be considered here.

Cleanness and *Patience* are purely didactic. They consist of just over 1,800 and 500 lines respectively, in the alliterative metre of *Piers Plowman*. *Cleanness* is diffuse and unsymmetrical. It is homiletic, expounding such themes as the Marriage Feast, the Fall of the Angels and the Fall of Man, the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the fates of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. It contains much fine descriptive detail, the story of the Ark being especially noteworthy.

Patience, the story of Jonah, is a more mature work, no less vigorous than *Cleanness*, but more finished in plan and construction. Never dull, it has a subtle and refreshing humour.

Pearl is both lyrical and narrative. In its perfection of poetic spirit and of form, it is among the most striking poems of this or of any other age. It is composed of twenty groups of five stanzas, each containing twelve short four-stressed lines, with the rhymes *a b a b a b a b b c b c*. All the stanzas within each group are united by refrain, and stanza is bound to stanza and group to group by a skilful repetition of salient words or phrases.

His peerless pearl, worthy to be a prince's jewel, has slipped from the poet's grasp. Lingering amid the flowers where his pearl lies buried, he falls asleep. And his spirit is wafted into a far land of great beauty, where, beyond a fair stream, is Paradise. Beneath a crystal cliff stands a gracious maiden in royal array, who now draws nigh the stream, to greet, to admonish, and to comfort him. His lost pearl, now a bride of the Lamb of God, tells of St. John's Vision of the New Jerusalem. None may enter that blissful bower save the spotless and pure, but by the favour of the Lamb she may grant him a sight of it from afar. She points to the path, and the dreamer tarries not on his way until he views the Heavenly City. And there, among the throng about the Throne of the Lamb, he beholds again his pearl. The vision passes, and the poet is solaced in his earthly prison by the knowledge that his pearl is a jewel of that Prince to whose blessing he now commends her.

The poem has been thought by some to be an allegory ; but it is generally regarded as the work of a man who had suffered the actual and personal loss of a beloved little daughter.

Lyrical Pieces.—By far the greater number of Middle English lyrics are religious and moralizing.

The earliest recorded is a prayer to the Virgin, by the Blessed Godric (middle of 12th century). Probably only a little later in composition are the poems beginning " Cristes milde moder, seynte Marie," " On hire is al mi lif ylong," " Now skrinketh rose and lylie flour," and half a dozen others equally beautiful. Contemporary with these is a little reflective song beginning :

Wynter wakeneth al my care ;
Nou this leves waxeth bare ;
Ofte I sike [1] and mourne sare,[2]
When hit cometh in my thought
Of this worldes joie, hou hit geth [3] al to nought.

Richard Rolle's lyrics have already been mentioned. In similar spirit the Franciscan brother Thomas de Hales in the reign of Henry III. wrote a " love rune " which should teach a young nun to choose the Heavenly Bridegroom.

The early secular lyrics which have survived are, unfortunately, not very numerous. The best-known is the *Cuckoo Song*, contained in an MS. probably written at Reading Abbey about the year 1240. It is set to music, for which alternative pious Latin words are provided. Earlier even than this is the little song :

Mirie it is while sumer ilast
With fowles song ;
But nu nigheth windes blast,
And weder strong.

---

[1] sigh. [2] sore. [3] goes.

Ei ei,[1] how this night is long!
And I with wel michel wrong
Sorew and murne and fast.

We have a story as far back as Henry II.'s reign of a Worcester priest who absent-mindedly chanted "Swete lemman [darling] thine ore [mercy]" in place of "Dominus vobiscum," and a similar line actually occurs in one of the pretty lyrics written down at Leominster Abbey about the year 1300. Among the others are the well-known *Lenten is come* and *Alysoun*, and the pleasant love-dialogue of lady and clerk beginning "My deth I love, my lyf I hate."

Of later artistic and scholarly work of this kind one verse must suffice:

A vous jeo suy tut doné;
Mine herte is ful of love to thee,
Presento;
Et pur ceo jeo vous pry,
Sweting, for thin curtesy,
Memento.

Political Verse.—Our 13th-century political pieces are mostly in Latin, Provençal, or Anglo-Norman, the work of clerks. But the battle of Lewes has given us one English song, in the style but without the excellence of Minot, viz., *The King of Almaigne.*

From the early 14th century considerably more has come down to us. Some of these pieces deal with the sufferings of the lower classes. Of this kind are a song on the extortions of haywards, bailiffs, and beadles; a satire showing the Wolf, the Fox, and the Ass in the Lion's Court; and an interesting trilingual Complaint which contains the lines:

Lex lyth doun overal, fallax fraus fallit ubique;
Ant love nys bote smal, quia gens se gestat inique.
Wo walketh wyde, quoniam movet ira potentes;
Ryht con nout ryde, quia vadit ad insipientes.

Slightly later than the above, and in every way an improvement on them, is the rather lengthy production beginning:

Whi werre and wrake in londe and manslauht is i-come,
Whi hungger and derthe on eorthe the pore hath undernome,[2]
Whi bestes ben thus storve, whi corn hath ben so dere,
Ye that wolen abide, listneth and ye muwen[3] here
the skile.[4]
I nelle[5] lyen for no man, herkne whoso wile.

Other pieces are concerned with social abuses. One sneers at women who dress like their betters, another is coarse abuse of grooms and horseboys, a third is evidently the tirade of a minstrel who has had unpleasant experiences of the Consistory Courts. But by no stretch of imagination can these be called literature.

[1] alas! [2] received. [3] may. [4] reason. [5] will not.

Others, again, are partisan or patriotic songs. Of these, the tags of abuse of the Scots, found in Pierre de Langtoft's *Chronicle*, are very feeble. A crow over Sir Simon Fraser is a little better, and reads like third-rate Minot. The *Lament on the Death of Edward I.*, and the rather earlier song of the victory of the Flemings over the French, are probably the only English political poems of literary interest until we come to the reign of Edward III. and the appearance at last of a writer who is patriot and poet as well, Laurence Minot.

MINOT was a Northerner, possibly a Yorkshireman, who by about the year 1352 had produced eleven extraordinarily good war-poems, on such subjects as Halidon Hill, Neville's Cross, Crécy, the Siege of Tournay, and the Sea Fight at Sluys. He has a sturdy contempt for England's enemies, and expresses it in good, lilting verse. The average modern Englishman will find him easier to read than Chaucer or Burns ; and, violent as he is, he repays reading.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING LIST

Texts.—Of the works referred to above, the following are published by the Early English Text Society: **Cursor Mundi*, **Handlyng Synne*, **Ayenbite of Inwyt*, *Lives of SS. Katherine, Juliana, and Margaret*, *Hali Meidenhad*, William of Shoreham's **Works*.

Other full editions are: Layamon's **Brut*, ed. Sir F. Madden (3 vols., 1847); **Ormulum*, ed. Holt (1878); Robert of Gloucester's **Chronicle*, ed. Wright (Rolls Series, 1887); Robert of Brunne's *Chronicle*, ed. F. J. Furnivall (Rolls Series, 1889); Richard Rolle, ed. Horstmann (Yorkshire Writers, Sonnenschein, 1895–6); **Pricke of Conscience*, ed. Morris (Philological Society, Trübner, 1863); **Ancren Riwle*, ed. Morton (Camden Society, 1853); **Owl and Nightingale*, ed. Wells (Heath, 1909); *Minot, L., *Poems*, ed. J. Hall (Clarendon Press, 1897).

Good collections are: CHAMBERS and SIDGWICK, *Early English Lyrics* (Bullen, 1911), the best introduction to the subject; MORRIS, *An Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S.), for narrative and didactic verse and religious lyrics; BÖDDEKER, *Altenglische Dichtungen der MS. Harl.* 2253 (Berlin, 1878), for political songs, secular and religious lyrics, the *Debate of the Body and the Soul*, and the *Harrowing of Hell*, the last also in A. W. POLLARD's *English Miracle Plays* (Oxford, 1909); WRIGHT, *Political Songs* (Camden Society, 1839); *Pearl*, ed. Sir I. Gollancz (Nutt, 1907); *Patience* and *Cleanness*, same ed. (Milford, 1913–21).

Suitable extracts from the works starred above will be found in MORRIS and SKEAT, *Specimens of Early English* (Clarendon Press); from Layamon's *Brut* and Robert of Brunne's *Chronicle* in ZUPITZA, *Alt- und Mittelengl. Uebungsbuch* (Vienna, 1902).

Readers to whom Middle English is a new subject will be well advised to study SWEET's *First Middle English Primer* (Clarendon Press). This should be followed by M. H. LIDDELL's *Chaucer Prologue, Knightes Tale and Nonnes Prestes Tale* (Macmillan), and then by HALL's ed. of Minot.

Chapter 8. THE LANGUAGE—MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (*c.* 1100–1350)

Middle English Dialects—The Texts—Spelling, Scripts, Pronunciation, and general characteristics

Old English came to an end with the generation which saw the Conquest, and the 12th century marks a break in the literary and linguistic tradition. Under the predominance of French the literary prestige of West Saxon declined with that of the vernacular in general, and the literature of the 13th century shows no trace of approximation to any standard dialect, while apologies for the use of the vernacular are frequent. In the 14th century English comes to its own, and the London usage becomes the basis of the new standard from 1350.

Middle English Dialects.—The chief dialect-groups were as follows :

1. Northern (O.E. Northumbrian), differentiated from Lowland Scots after 1350.
2. Midland (O.E. Mercian) : (*a*) East-Midland ; (*b*) West-Midland.
3. Southern : (*a*) South-Western (O.E. West-Saxon) ; (*b*) South-Eastern (O.E. Kentish).

The geographical boundaries were approximately the same as before the Conquest, except that the old West-Saxon was receding into the south-west. The dialect of London retained Southern features up to 1250,[1] but had practically amalgamated with the neighbouring East-Midland by the end of the 14th century.

Some of the more important *dialectal differences* are : Northern *hām, stān, āld* (hame, stane, auld), Midland and Southern *hōm, stōn, ōld ;* Northern and Midland *kin, sin, fier,* Southern *cun, sunne, vuir,* Kentish *ken, zenne, veer ;* Northern *lang, sang,* Midland and Southern *long, song ;* Northern *kirk, dīc,* Southern *churche, diche,* etc. There are also differences in the forms of the pronoun and the verb, and the South was particularly conservative in the retention of old inflectional forms lost in the Midland and North.

Middle English Texts.—Amongst the earliest texts are the 12th-century additions to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* made at Peterborough (1121–54), which represent the last traces of literary West-Saxon, and the *Lambeth Collection of Homilies* (12th century), some of which also exist in 11th-century West-Saxon. An important early text is the *Ormulum* (*c.* 1210) of Orm, a native of Lincolnshire, which is of great phonological value.

Orm's Spelling.—Orm regularly indicates the quantity of vowels by doubling the consonant after every short vowel in a closed syllable, *e.g. Orrmulumm, Ennglisshe, annd, turrnedd.* He also attempted some qualitative distinctions, particularly with regard to the different values of *g* (Modern English *g, y, dg, gh*).

[1] *Cf.* the *Proclamation of Henry III.* (1258), which combines Midland and Southern elements.

Middle English texts may be conveniently grouped according to their dialect; but the evidence is often unsatisfactory, except in the case of rhyme or of MSS. known to be from the author's own hand, since texts were frequently subject to scribal alteration or transcription into another dialect. A representative collection of specimens in chronological order may be found in Morris and Skeat's *Specimens of Early English* (Oxford, 1894 and 1898).

Spelling and Script.—English spelling was partly remodelled on French in the early 13th century, and by 1250 the following changes were regularly in use:

qu, wh, for O.E. *cw, wh*; *k, ch*, for *c*, as in *keen, child* (O.E. *cēne, cild*), but *corn* (O.E. *corn*); *s(c)h* for *sc*; *v* (*u*) for *f* between vowels; *a, e*, for æ; *i, u* for *y*; *ou* for *ū* (as in French *bout, tu*); *y* as a variant for *i*. The native script was superseded by the Continental small letters, which was in regular use after 1200, but the native characters þ, ð, ƿ, ȝ were retained until the 14th century, when they were replaced by *th, w*, and *g* (*y, gh*). þ was still used in MS. abbreviations þᵉ, þᵗ, etc., often written yᵉ, yᵗ, and ȝ survives in a few Scottish words (*Menzies, Dalziel, gaberlunzie*).

Pronunciation.—In spite of the more modern character of the spelling, the actual pronunciation remained much the same as in Old English, with the exception of certain changes in vowel-quantity—*e.g.*, O.E. *nāma, beran, nosu*, M.E. *nāme, bēren, nōse*. The various qualitative changes which occurred are indicated in the spelling, which thus remained approximately phonetic. Some of the more important of these may be seen in the following words:

O.E. stān, þæt, synn, M.E. stōn, that, sin; O.E. dēaþ, dēop, eall, heorte, M.E. dēthe, dēpe, all, herte; O.E. dæg, dragan, bōh, M.E. dai, drawen, bough, etc.

General Characteristics of Middle English.—(*a*) *Inflection.* The Old English inflectional system was already full of ambiguities, and these, together with the levelling of endings arising from the general weakening of the unstressed vowels to *-e*, led to the breaking up of that system in Middle English. The weak declension of nouns and adjectives had already disappeared in Old Northumbrian, and by 1200 few more inflections remained in Northern and North-Midland than at the present day. The Southern dialects retained many old forms, such as the weak plural of nouns, and inflected forms of the adjective and article, as late as the 14th century. In Midland and Northern the newly developed *she, sho* (O.E. *hēo* = *she*), and the early use of the Norse demonstratives *they, their, them* (O.N. *þeir, þeirra, þeim*) as personal pronouns, avoided the ambiguity of the Southern *he* (masculine and feminine), *he, hi, her, hem* (plural), while the dative and accusative were reduced to one form in both nouns and pronouns. Levelling took place also in the verbal inflection, and many strong verbs became weak.

(*b*) *Syntax.*—With the loss of inflections, the syntax became more analytic, and the number of prepositional and other periphrastic constructions increased. The lack of a distinctive inflection led to a confusion of the dative in impersonal constructions with the subject of the verb, *cf.* Chaucer's "wo was his coke." New

constructions such as the historic present, the accusative absolute, and the omission of the relative are also found, possibly in part under French influence, and the use of the plural *you* in polite address was adopted from the French.

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